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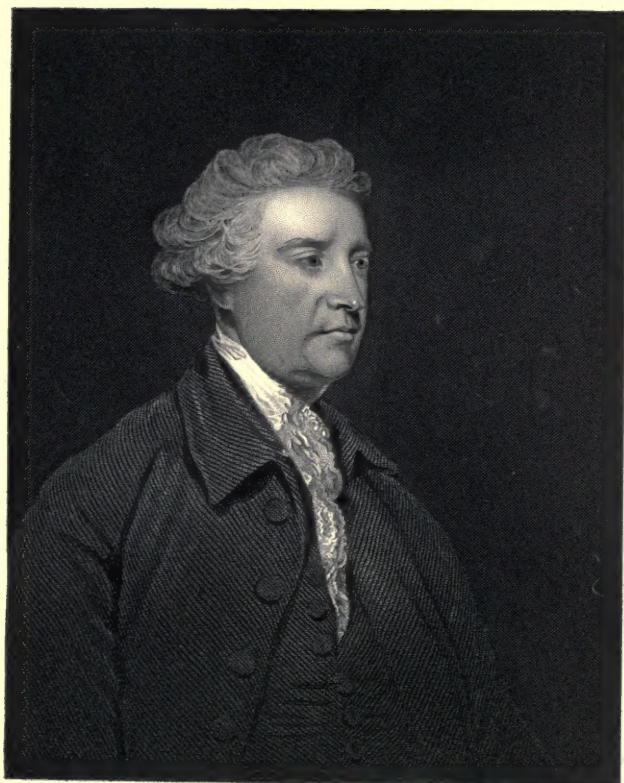
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HISTORY OF EUROPE

"BELLUM maxime omnium memorabile, quæ unquam gesta sint, me scripturum ; quod, Hannibale duce, Carthaginienses cum populo Romano gessêre. Nam neque validiores opibus ullæ inter se civitates gentesque contulerunt arma, neque his ipsis tantum unquam virium aut roboris fuit : et haud ignotas belli artes inter se, sed expertas primo Punico conserebant bello : odiis etiam prope majoribus certârunt quam viribus : et adeo varia belli fortuna ancepsque Mars fuit, ut propius periculum fuerint qui vicerunt."—LIVY, lib. xxi.



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BUTTERICK,

HISTORY OF EUROPE

FROM

THE COMMENCEMENT OF

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

TO THE

RESTORATION OF THE BOURBONS

IN MDCCCXV

BY

SIR ARCHIBALD ALISON, BART., D.C.L.

Tenth Edition, with Portraits

VOL. III.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

MDCCCLX

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HISTORY OF EUROPE.

CHAPTER XIII.

CAMPAIGN OF 1793.

A CONTEST between France and England has, in every age, been the greatest source of excitement to the people in both countries; but at no former period were their passions so strongly roused as at the commencement of the Revolutionary war. Not only was national rivalry, the growth of centuries, revived, but new and fiercer passions arose from the civil interests which were brought into collision. The dominant party in England regarded the war with France, not merely as a contest with a rival power, in which glory or conquest was to be won, but as a struggle for existence, in which their lives, their fortunes, and their country, were at stake. The French Republicans looked upon the accession of England to the league of their enemies as the signal of deadly combat with the principles of freedom; and anticipated from defeat not only national humiliation, but individual ruin. The English nobility beheld in the conquests of the Republicans the dissemination of the principles of revolution and anarchy, the spread of infidelity, the reign of the guillotine; the French Jacobins saw in the victories of the Allies the near approach of moral retribution, the revenge of injury, the empire of the sword.

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.

1.
Vehemence
of all wars
between
France and
England.

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.
2.

Great divi-
sion of opi-
nion on the
French Re-
volution in
Great Bri-
tain.

No words can convey an adequate idea of the bitterness of party feeling which divided this country upon the breaking out of the war in 1793. "War to the palace, and peace to the cottage," was the principle of the French Revolution. Its proclamation necessarily set the two classes of society throughout Europe at variance with each other; and instead of the ancient rivalry of kings, introduced the fiercer strife of the people. Like the Peloponnesian war, the contest thenceforth raged not only between nation and nation, but between interest and interest; a strife of opinion superseded that for glory; and in every province and in every city, numbers were to be found who watched the contending parties with opposite feelings, and hoped in the victory of foreign enemies for the downfall of domestic foes. England, as well as France, had talent impatient of obscurity; ardour which demanded employment; ambition which sought distinction; passion which required excitation. To such men, the whole body of the aristocracy became an object of uncontrollable jealousy; and nothing short of the equality proclaimed by the French rulers seemed the fit destiny of society. Hence the division of the country into Aristocrats and Democrats, the introduction of political hatred into the bosom of families, and the dissolution of many friendships which all the misfortunes of life could never have severed. Time heals almost all other sorrows, absence softens the worst causes of irritation; but experience has proved, that the political divisions of 1793 never were forgotten by those who were of an age to feel their influence.¹

¹ Scott's
Napoleon,
i. 280.

3.

Arguments
against the
war by the
Whigs.

The breaking out of the war formed a new subject of discord between the contending parties. On the part of the Opposition, it was argued, that to plunge into a desperate conflict, for so inconsiderable an object as the opening of the Scheldt, was to incur a certain and heavy loss on account of a most trifling cause of complaint: that the whole trade with the United Provinces was not worth one year's expense of the contest; and that, while it was

easy to see what England had to lose, it was difficult to conceive what she could possibly gain from the strife she had so unnecessarily provoked : that if the spread of revolutionary opinions was the evil which, in reality, was dreaded, nothing could be imagined so likely to increase the danger as engaging in a war, because it is during its perils that the interchange of opinions is most rapid, and prejudice most certainly yields to the force of necessity : that thoughts are not to be confined by walls, nor freedom fenced in by bayonets : that the moral agents requisite for carrying the designs of tyranny into execution become the instruments for its own destruction ; and that the despots who now sought to extinguish freedom in France would find, like the Eastern Sultaun, that the forces they had brought up to avert the plague were the means of spreading its contagion through all the provinces of the empire.

On the other hand, the Tories maintained that the war was both just and expedient—just, because the Dutch, the ancient allies of Britain, were threatened with invasion, and the destruction of rights on which the existence of their Republic depended ; expedient, because experience had proved that such an aggression could not be permitted without ruin to the vital interests of Britain : that such a violation of neutral rights came with a peculiarly bad grace from France, that power having, only ten years before, successfully interfered on the footing of ancient treaties, to prevent that very act in regard to the Scheldt navigation on the part of Austria, which was now threatened by her own forces : that if Great Britain was to sit by and tamely behold the rights of her allies, and of all neutral powers, sacrificed by her ancient rival, there would soon be an end, not only to her foreign influence, but to her internal security : that it was evident that the Republicans, who had now acquired the government of France, were impelled by the thirst for universal dominion, and would never rest till, by the aid of revolution in the

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1793.

4.
And for it by
the Tories.

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1793.

adjoining states, they had incorporated them all with the ruling Republic: that the recent annexation of Savoy, Nice, and Flanders, with the French territory, gave sufficient proof of this grasping disposition, and afforded due warning to the neighbouring powers to place no reliance on the professions of a state, in which no principle was fixed but that of republican ambition: that treaties were vain with a government subject to such sudden changes as that of the French Republic, in which each successive party that rose to the head of affairs, disregarding the faith of ancient engagements, sought only to gain a short-lived popularity by new and dazzling schemes of foreign aggression: that the Convention had already given the clearest indication of its resolution to shake itself loose of all former obligations, by its remarkable declaration, that "Treaties made by despots could never bind the free and enlightened inhabitants of Belgium:" that in all ages republics had been the most ambitious and the most warlike of states, in consequence of the restless and insatiable spirit which their institutions tended to nourish among the mass of their citizens, and the necessity which their rulers felt themselves under of signalling their short-lived power by some acts calculated to dazzle the multitude; that the French Republic had already given ample proof that it was not destined to form any exception to the general rule, and even if its leaders were inclined to such forbearance, the suffering and ambition of the people would soon drive them into action: that history proved both that France was too powerful for Europe when her territory was advanced to the Rhine, and that the moment her influence became predominant, it would all be directed with inveterate hostility against this country: that in this way the contest would sooner or later approach our own shores, and if so, how much better to anticipate the evil, when it might be done with comparative ease, and crush the growing Republic before it wielded the forces of Europe at its will.¹

¹ Parl. Hist.
xxx. p. 79-
128. Annual
Register,
1793, p. 15.

Such were the arguments urged in this country generally on the policy of this great undertaking : those advanced in parliament related, as is usual with debates in that assembly, less to the general policy of the measure, or the principles involved in it on both sides, than to the immediate causes which had led to a rupture.

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1793.

On the part of the Opposition, it was contended by Mr Fox and Mr Grey, “ that the causes of war with France were in no respect different now from what they were under the government of Louis XIV. or Louis XVI. What, then, were those causes ? Not an insult or aggression, but a refusal of satisfaction when specifically demanded. What proof had ministers produced of such demand and of such refusal ? It may be admitted that the decree of 19th November entitled this country to require some satisfaction ; but even of this they could not show that any clear and specific explanation had been demanded. Security that the French would not act upon that decree was, indeed, mentioned in one of Lord Grenville’s letters, but what kind of security was neither specified nor even named. The same might be said with respect to the opening of the Scheldt, and the conquest of Brabant. We complained of an attack on the rights of our ally ; we remonstrated against an accession of territory alarming to Europe ; but we proposed nothing that would be admitted as satisfaction for the injury—we pointed out nothing that would remove our alarm. The same argument applied to their conquest of Savoy from the King of Sardinia, with whom, in their opinion, they were at war as much as with the Emperor. Can it be said, that it was our business only to complain, and theirs to propose satisfaction ? Common sense would see that this was too much for one independent power to expect of another. By what clue could they discover that which would satisfy those who did not choose to tell with what they would be satisfied ? How could they judge of the too little or the too much ? And was it not natural for them

5.
Arguments
in Parlia-
ment on the
same sub-
ject.

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1793.

to suppose that complaints, for which nothing was stated as adequate satisfaction, there was no disposition to withdraw? Yet on this the whole question of aggression hinged; for that the refusal of satisfaction, and not the insult, was the justifiable cause of war, was not merely their opinion, but the opinion of all the writers on the law of nations: and how could that be said to have been refused which was never asked? Of the death of the King, none could ever speak but with grief and detestation. But was the expression of our sorrow all that we did? Was not the atrocious event made the subject of a message from his Majesty to both houses of parliament? And now they would ask the few more candid men who owned that they thought this event alone a sufficient cause of war, what end could be gained by further negotiations with Chauvelin, with Marat, or Dumourier? Did ministers mean to barter the blood of this ill-fated monarch for any of the points in dispute? to say that the evacuation of Brabant shall atone for so much, the evacuation of Savoy for so much more? Of this they would accuse no man; but, on their principle, when the crime was committed negotiation must cease. It might be admitted, however, as had been stated on the opposite side, that this crime was no cause of war; but if it were admitted to be so, it was surely not decent that the subject of war should never be even mentioned without reverting to the death of the King. When the attack on France was called the cause of kings, it was not only a very witty, but a sufficient reply, that opposing it might be called the cause of subjects. It is fortunate that the public abhorrence of a war on such a motive was so great, that ministers felt themselves called upon to disclaim it at great length. But how had they acted? They had taken advantage of the folly of the French; they had negotiated without proposing specific terms, and then broken off the negotiation.¹ At home they had alarmed the people that their own constitution was in danger, and they had made

¹ Parl. Hist.
xxx. 370,
378.

use of a melancholy event, which, however it might affect us as men, did not concern us as a nation, to inflame our passions and impel us to war ; and now that we were at war, they durst not avow the causes of it, nor tell us on what terms peace might have been preserved.”

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-1793.

On the other hand, it was contended by Mr Pitt and Mr Burke, that, “ whatever temptations might have existed to this country from ancient enmity and rivalry—paltry motives indeed !—or whatever opportunity might have been afforded by the tumultuous and distracted state of France, or whatever sentiments might be excited by the transactions which had taken place in that nation, his majesty had uniformly abstained from all interference in its internal government, and had maintained with respect to it, on every occasion, the strictest and most inviolable neutrality. Such being his conduct towards France, he had a right to expect on their part a suitable return ; more especially as this return had been expressly conditioned for by a compact, into which they entered, and by which they engaged to respect the rights of his majesty and his allies, not to interfere in the government of any neutral country, and not to pursue any system of aggrandisement, or make any additions to their dominions, but to confine themselves at the conclusion of the war within their own territories. These conditions they had all grossly violated ; they had adopted a system of ambitious and destructive policy fatal to the peace and security of every government, and which, in its consequences, had shaken Europe itself to its foundations. Their decree of the 19th of November, which had been so much talked of, offering fraternity and alliance to all people who wished to recover their liberty, was a decree not levelled against particular nations, but against every country where there was any form of government established—a decree not hostile to individuals, but to the human race—which was calculated everywhere to sow the seeds of rebellion and civil contention, and to spread war from one

6.

Reply by Mr
Burke and
Mr Pitt.

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end of Europe to the other, from one end of the globe to the other. While they were bound to this country by these obligations, they had showed no intention to exempt it from the consequences of this decree. Not only had they evinced no inclination to fulfil their engagements, but they had even put it out of their own power, by taking the first opportunity to make additions to their territory, in contradiction to their own express stipulations. By express resolutions for the destruction of the existing government of all invaded countries, by means of Jacobin societies, by orders given to their generals, by the whole system adopted in this respect by the National Assembly, and by the actual annexation of the whole country of Savoy, they had marked their determination to add to the dominions of France, and to provide means, through the medium of every new conquest, to diffuse their principles over Europe. Their conduct was such, that in every instance it had militated against the dearest and most valuable interests of this country. The catastrophe of the French monarch they ought all to feel deeply ; and, consistently with that impression, be led more firmly to resist those principles from which an event of so black and atrocious a nature had proceeded—principles which, if not opposed, might be expected in their progress to lead to the commission of similar crimes. But, notwithstanding all this, although government had been obliged to decline all communication which tended to acknowledge the authority of the Convention, still they had left open the means of accommodation, nor could that line of conduct which they had pursued be stated as affording any ground of hostility.”¹

¹ Parl. Hist.
xxx. 345,
362.

7.
Real mo-
tives for the
war.

The event has at length enabled the historian to decide which of these views was the most reasonable ; for we know the evil we have incurred, and we can figure the peril we have escaped, by engaging in the contest. In truth, the arguments urged by government were not the only motives for commencing the war. The danger they

apprehended lay nearer home than the conquests of the Republicans ; it was not foreign subjugation so much as domestic revolution which was dreaded, if a pacific intercourse were any longer maintained with France. “Croyez-moi,” said the Empress Catherine to Ségur, in 1789, “une guerre seule peut changer la direction des esprits en France, les réunir, donner un but plus utile aux passions, et réveiller le vrai patriotisme.”¹ * In this observation ¹ Ségur, iii. 242. CHAP. XIII. 1793.

is contained the true secret, and the best vindication of the Revolutionary war. The passions were excited ; democratic ambition was awakened ; the desire of power, under the name of reform, was rapidly gaining ground among the middle ranks, and the institutions of the country were threatened with an overthrow as violent as that which had recently taken place in the French monarchy. In these circumstances, the only mode of checking the evil was by engaging in a foreign contest, by drawing off the ardent spirits into active service, and, in lieu of the modern desire for innovation, rousing the ancient gallantry of the British people. When passion, whether in the political body or in the individual, is once roused, it is in vain, during the paroxysm, to combat it with the weapons of reason. A man in love is proverbially inaccessible to argument, and a nation heated in the pursuit of political power is as incapable of listening either to the deductions of the understanding, or the lessons of experience. The only way in such times of averting the evil, is by presenting some new object of pursuit, which is not only attractive to the thinking few, but to the unthinking many ; by counteracting one passion by the growth of another, and summoning to the support of truth not only the armour of reason, but the fire of imagination. Great as has been the burden, enormous the waste, prodigal the expenditure of the war,

* “ Believe me, a war alone can change the direction of men’s minds in France, reunite them, give a more useful aim to the passions, and awaken true patriotism.”

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¹ Ségur, iii.
251. Ann.
Reg. 1793,
172.

the evils thence arising are trifling in comparison of what would have ensued had a revolution taken place. Such an event, its advocates themselves confess, can only benefit future generations by the destruction of the present; its horrors, in a country such as England, where three-fourths of the whole population depend upon the wages of labour, and would be directly deprived of bread by the destruction of capital, would have exceeded anything yet experienced in modern times.¹

Another question, which strongly agitated the English people at this juncture, was that of reform in parliament, which the popular party deemed it a favourable opportunity to urge, when a considerable part of the nation was so vehemently excited by the triumph of revolution in France.

8.
Debate in
parliament
on parlia-
mentary
Reform.

In the House of Commons, it was argued by Mr Grey and Mr Erskine, "That the state of the national representation, especially in Scotland as compared with Cornwall, was so unequal, that no rational argument could be advanced in support of it. A majority of the House of Commons is returned by less than fifteen thousand electors, which is not more than a two-hundredth part of the male adults of the kingdom: this franchise, limited as it is, legally recurs only once in seven years: the total representation for Scotland was only one greater than that for Cornwall alone: twenty members were returned by thirty-five places where the right of voting was vested in burgage or similar tenures, and the elections were notoriously a matter of mere form: ninety more are chosen by forty-six places, where the right of voting is confined to less than fifty persons each: thirty-seven by nineteen places, in which the number of voters is under one hundred; fifty-two by twenty-six places, in none of which the voters exceed two hundred: thirty in Scotland, by counties having less than two hundred and fifty votes; and fifteen by Scotch boroughs not containing one hundred and twenty-five each. In this way two hundred

and ninety-four members, a majority of the House of Commons, are chosen by a nominal and fictitious system, under which the people have hardly any choice in their election.

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“In addition to this, the elective franchise is so various, complicated, and grotesque, that endless litigation and confusion arise from its practical operation. Religious opinions create an incapacity to vote in all Papists, and in thirty boroughs Protestant dissenters are, by the Test and Corporation laws, excluded from the franchise; copyholders, how wealthy soever, are universally excluded; and from the recent returns, it appears that no less than 939,000 householders in England alone had no voice in the representation. In Scotland, matters are still worse, the great mass of the people being altogether excluded from any voice in the legislature, and the members chosen by twenty-five hundred persons, great part of whom have only fictitious or parchment votes. In fine, one hundred and fifty-four powerful and wealthy individuals can determine the returns in no less than three hundred and seven seats, being a majority of the whole Commons of England.¹

9.
Mr Grey
and Mr Erskine's argument for it.

¹ Parl. Hist.
xxx. 789,
796.

“We are always told, when this question is introduced into parliament, that the present juncture is not the proper season for bringing forward the measure. Nothing, however, can be more obvious than that this excuse is now totally unfounded. The burst of loyalty on the breaking out of the war, of which the government so loudly boast, demonstrates the groundless nature of any such apprehension at this time. If ever there was any danger to this country from the propagation of French principles, that danger unquestionably is at an end; for no set of men, who have not actually lost their senses, would ever propose the French Revolution as a model for imitation. No argument from the present situation of France, therefore, can be drawn against the adoption of a rational reform in this country. The greatest statesmen whom this country has ever produced, have advocated the

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cause which we now bring forward. It had been supported by Mr Locke, Sir William Blackstone, Sir George Saville, and the present Chief Baron and Chief Justice. It had the countenance, in his earlier years, of Mr Pitt himself; it had been advocated by the Duke of Richmond; and by an authority greater than either, that of the King himself, in his speech 24th May 1784, wherein his majesty says, ‘that he should ever be ready to concur in supporting, in their just balance, the rights and privileges of every branch of the Legislature.’

“The present state of the representation is so monstrous that it cannot, on general principles, be supported by any rational man. Who can defend a system which enables one English county to return as many members as the whole kingdom of Scotland? and allows representatives to be sent from many places where hardly a house now remains? If there was any one principle more strongly inculcated than another at the Revolution, it was, that the election of the House of Commons should be free. One of the grounds assigned at that period for the dethronement of James was, that he had violated the freedom of election; another, that a man ought not to be governed by laws in the framing of which he had not a voice, or to pay taxes to which he had not consented in the same way. Is not the present state of things a direct departure from both these principles? At the Revolution, too, the necessity of short parliaments was asserted; and is not the theory and practice of the constitution now a direct infringement of this principle? Can there be a more complete mockery than the system of representation in Scotland, where a nobleman’s steward goes down to a borough with ten or twelve pieces of parchment in his hand, and, having assembled round a table ten or twelve of his master’s dependents, secures the return. Mr Pitt had brought forward a motion for an addition of one hundred to the county members; and in the commencement of every session, it is entered on the journals of the

House, ‘That it is a high infringement of the liberties and privileges of the Commons of England for any Lord of Parliament, or Lord-Lieutenant, to concern themselves in the election of members for parliament.’ Better far at once to repeal such resolutions, and openly proclaim our servility, than allow them to remain there, when the practice was so totally at variance with them.”¹

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¹ Parl. Hist.
xxx. 799,
807.

To this it was replied by Mr Pitt, Mr Burke, and Mr Jenkinson—“The liberty of a country depends on its government, and very little experience must be sufficient to demonstrate that different countries require different institutions. The real test of their practical influence is to be found in their effects. Judging by this standard, what opinion must we form of the British constitution? Is not property secure? Is not the administration of justice pure? Have we not arrived at a pitch of prosperity under it, unparalleled in any other age or country? And what have been the fruits of the speculations of those who, disregarding the lessons of experience, have aimed at the establishment of institutions framed with a view to theoretical perfection? The turbulent faction and unsettled despotism of democracy. The spots of the sun do not diminish its splendour. In considering the merits of the constitution, its working upon the whole is to be considered: the question is not, whether certain parts of it, if they stood alone, are defensible, but whether the whole machine is not admirable: not whether defects exist, but whether experience has not proved that these defects so far counteract each other, as to render it to the last degree perilous to interfere with the venerable fabric.

10.
Answers of
Mr Pitt, Mr
Burke, and
Mr Jenkin-
son.

“I myself,” said Mr Pitt, “once brought forward a motion for reform, and I am desirous of stating the reasons which induce me now to oppose it. I did so during a period of profound peace, when no speck appeared in the political horizon, and when the opportunity appeared favourable for amending our institutions, with a view to

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their preservation. Now the case is totally different. The French Revolution has entirely changed, not only the expedience of such a measure, but the class of men by whom, and the objects for which, it is supported. Since that great convulsion arose, I have observed arising in this country a small, but not contemptible party, whose object is very different from moderate reform—who aspire to nothing less than to introduce the French principles, with all their horrors. In such circumstances, all the practical good to be expected from reform has disappeared, and the dangers to be apprehended from the adoption of any considerable change have augmented tenfold. Upon this ground, even had I rated as high as ever the advantages of reform, I would rather have abandoned my project than incurred such a danger. It is evident now, that the question is not, whether a moderate reform is to be conceded, but whether admission is to be afforded to the point of the wedge, which, when driven home, will rend asunder and dissolve the empire.

“From whom do the petitions for reform now come ? Is it from the friends of the British constitution ; from those whose character and principles warrant the belief that their object is to renovate, not destroy, our institutions ? No ; they all come from the societies affiliated in this country for the purpose of spreading the Jacobin principles ; from the avowed and ardent admirers of the French Republic ; from the correspondents and imitators of the National Assembly ; from men in whom all the horrors which that Assembly has engendered, and all the blood it has caused to flow, cannot awaken any distrust of these principles. We must be blind indeed if we do not perceive what is the real object of innovation supported by such a party. In France, at the same time, they invariably mention parliamentary reform as the medium by which all their revolutionary projects are to be forwarded in this country, and speak of a change in our representation as but a step to the formation of a British Convention,

and the total destruction of all our civil and religious institutions.

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“Is it, then, to a party small in number, but dangerous from character, that we are to concede the first step on the ladder of innovation? Are we to disregard entirely the immense majority of loyal citizens, who are too sensible of the blessings they enjoy to risk them by such a change? What is the question really at issue? It is not whether the constituencies of Cornwall and Scotland are really such as ideal perfection would approve: it is the same which is now at issue with the whole of Europe, who are contending for the cause of order, justice, humanity, and religion, in opposition to anarchy, injustice, cruelty, and infidelity. The undue ascendancy given to property in these districts, is the check to the otherwise peridious influence of numbers in the larger boroughs. Are we, at such a moment, in order to please a few individuals, to incur perils such as those we are now witnessing? This would, indeed, resemble the conduct of those who, at the moment when the citadel was besieged, should proceed to the discussion of points of difference, instead of providing the means of defence.

“I see no probability at this time of a temperate reform; I see no guarantee for it either in the temper of the times, or the character, habits, or views of those by whom it is supported. So far from satisfying them, it would only produce a craving for further concessions: they desire not the reform which they now advocate for itself, but as a stepping-stone to ulterior objects which they dare not avow, till their power of carrying them into effect is by this first acquisition secured. Knowing what these ulterior designs are—seeing the unspeakable horrors which they have introduced in that country where they have been carried into full effect, it is our duty to resist to the uttermost the first steps in the progress. The government which acts otherwise ceases to be a government; it unties the bands which knit together society; it forfeits the

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¹ Parl. Hist.
xxx. 808,
902.

11.
It is reject-
ed by the
House of
Commons.

reverence and obedience of its subjects ; it gives up those whom it ought to protect to the daggers of the Marseillais, and the assassins of Paris. The government of the multitude, to which reform is but a step, *is not the ruling of the few by the many, but of the many by the few*: with this difference, that the few at the head of affairs in such a state, are the most ambitious, reckless, and worthless of the community."¹*

Fortunately for England, and for the cause of freedom throughout the world, these arguments prevailed in the House of Commons. The motion for reform, brought forward by Mr Grey, was negatived by a majority of

* It is curious, on a subject of such vital importance to England as Parliamentary Reform, to contrast these arguments with those urged for and against the same measure in the memorable discussions of 1830 and 1831. A summary of these is here subjoined, taken from the speeches of Sir Robert Peel, Mr Croker, Lord Lyndhurst, Mr Stanley, and Lord-Advocate Jeffrey, as an instructive illustration of the progress of the human mind during the intervening period.

Parliamentary Reform.
Arguments
by which it
was support-
ed in 1831.

On the popular side, it was urged that the British constitution had gradually departed from the principles on which it was originally established, and on which alone stability could be expected for it in future : that by the decline of the population in some boroughs, and the vast increase of inhabitants in once rural districts, a large proportion of the members of the House of Commons had come to be returned by a few great families, while the majority of the people were totally unrepresented ; that such a state of things was an insupportable grievance to the bulk of the citizens, and could not fail, while it continued, to nourish perpetual discord between the holders of political influence and all the other classes of society ; that an oligarchy, at all times an invidious form of government, was peculiarly so at the present time, when the public mind was inflamed by the successful result of the late Revolution in France ; that by admitting a larger number to a share of political rights, the foundations of government would be laid on a broader basis, and a phalanx secured who would at all times resist the extension of their privileges to a lower class, and be found the firmest supporters of social order ; that it was altogether chimerical to suppose that there could be the slightest danger in extending the elective suffrage to a numerous body of voters, as the people were so habituated to political rights, and so enlightened by education, that they were as capable of exercising such franchise as their superiors ; that unless political institutions were enlarged with the increase of those who shared their protection, they would be outgrown by the multitude, and burst from the expansive force of intelligence and numbers ; that the true and legitimate influence of property could never be extinguished, and would only receive a wider sphere for its exertions by the increase of the circle to which the franchise was extended ; that all revolutions had been occasioned by the obstinate adherence to old institutions, at a time when the state of society required their alteration ; that timely concession was the only way to prevent convulsion, and in the present excited state of the public mind, if it was any longer delayed, the barriers of authority

282 to 41. The threats of revolution immediately subsided; the impending convulsions disappeared; and a measure, which it was confidently predicted would for ever alienate the higher from the lower orders, was succeeded by a degree of unanimity between them, in the most difficult times, such as had never before been witnessed in the British empire. And thus, at the very time that the French nobility, by yielding to the demand for concession, and surrendering all their privileges, advanced the Revolution in that country, the British aristocracy, by steadily resisting innovation, prevented it in theirs :¹ a memorable example to succeeding ages of

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¹ Ann. Reg.
1793, p. 153-
165. Parl.
Hist. xxx.
p. 787, 923-
925.

would be broken through, and all the horrors of the French Revolution brought upon the state.

On the other hand, it was contended by the aristocratic party, that the present was not a motion for the reform of a real grievance, which was at all times entitled to the most serious attention, but for an increase of political power to the lower orders, which was to be conceded or resisted according to its obvious tendency to preserve or subvert the balance of the constitution; that it was totally different from Mr Pitt's previous proposals of reform, which went to remove an admitted evil in a period of tranquillity; whereas the present motion was founded on a concession to French principles and democratic ambition, at a time of unexampled excitement: that it was evident that the popular party was already sufficiently strong, from the tenor of the acts which had been passed since the Revolution, which went rather to enlarge than abridge the liberty of the subject; that any further concession, therefore, would necessarily have the effect of overloading the balance on the popular side, and endangering the monarchical institutions of the state; that it was in vain to refer to early times for a precedent in support of a greater extension of the elective franchise, since the state of society was then essentially different from what it now is; that the power of the sword was then vested in the feudal barons, and the country was overspread with their armed retainers; whereas now the progress of wealth, and the invention of firearms, had destroyed this formidable power, while the increase of manufactures had augmented to a very great degree that of the middle ranks, and the diffusion of knowledge had increased tenfold their practical influence: that it might be quite safe to require representatives for all the boroughs, when the commons were a humble class in the state, and began their petitions with the words, "For God's sake, and as an act of mercy," while it would be highly dangerous to adopt a similar course, when the numbers of that class exceeded that of the agriculturists, and their wealth overbalanced that of all the other orders in the state; that the example of the Long Parliament sufficiently demonstrated that concession to popular clamours only led to fresh demands, and conducted, by an irresistible progress, to anarchy and revolution; that the fatal consequences which had formerly attended the duplication of the Tiers Etat, the parliamentary reform of France, was a signal example of the effects of that concession to democratic ambition which was now so loudly called for; that the King there yielded up all the prerogatives of his crown, and the nobles had made a voluntary surren-

Arguments
against it.

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the effect of firmness and decision on the part of parliament in stilling the violence of popular agitation, and checking the growth of democratic ambition ; and a proof how different the clamour of the press, of public meetings, and popular orators, often is from the sober judgment of a really free people.

12.
Bills against
correspondence with
France, and
prosecutions
for sedition
and treason.

As the agitation of the Jacobin clubs, however, still continued, and societies, in imitation of the parent institution in Paris, were rapidly forming in all the great towns of the kingdom, a bill against correspondence with France was passed by parliament, notwithstanding the utmost resistance by the Opposition, and prosecutions

der of their whole titles, rights, and privileges, and the consequence was, that the commons became irresistible, and the one was brought to an ignominious death, and the others were rewarded by exile, confiscation, and the scaffold ; that the rotten boroughs, so much the object of invective, were, in truth, the most important part of the British constitution, and that which alone had, contrary to all former experience, so long maintained the balance of the three estates, because they gave a direct influence to property in the legislature, and enabled the increasing wealth of the aristocracy to maintain its ground against the growing influence of the commons ; that an inlet was thus provided to parliament for men of talent, which had proved the means of introduction to our greatest statesmen, and which, if closed, would degrade its character, and convert the representatives of the people into the mere supporters of separate interests ; that it was in vain to expect, in the present period of excitement, and with the example of successful revolt in France, that wealth could permanently influence the lower orders, or maintain its ground, if deprived of this constitutional channel in the House of Commons ; that reform, therefore, would necessarily lead to revolution, and what revolution led to, need not be told to those who had witnessed the Reign of Terror ; that the hope of attaching a large portion of the lower orders, by the extension of the elective franchise, however specious in theory, would prove fallacious in practice, because they would soon find that their votes, from their great multiplication, were of no value ; that they had been deceived by the name of a privilege of no real service, and that the only way to obtain any practical benefit from their exertions, was to league with the humblest classes for a general spoliation of the higher ; that this was the natural tendency of the lower orders in all wealthy states, because union with the higher afforded no immediate advantage, whereas a league with those lower than themselves gave the prospect of a division of property, and liberation from burdens, and was, in an especial manner, to be apprehended in Britain at this time, because the public burdens were so excessive, property so unequally divided, and the example of a successful division of estates in France so recent ; that a reform in Parliament, unlike all other ameliorations, was to the last degree dangerous, because it was the voluntary surrender of legislative power to the lower orders, which could never be recovered, and a false step once taken, was irretrievable ; that, supposing there were some defects in the constitution indefensible in theory, it could not be disputed that, in practice, it had proved the best protection to the rights and

were commenced both in Scotland and England against the most violent of the demagogues. Some of them were clearly necessary ; the expedience of others, especially in Scotland, was more than doubtful, at least to the extent to which punishment was carried against generous, and often well-meaning, though dangerous and deluded men.* Those vindictive measures on the part of government are seldom really beneficial, which excite the sympathy of the humane as well as the turbulent, and convert the transient ebullition of popular feeling into the lasting bitterness of political hatred.¹ The true course in periods of public excitement is firmness without severity ; steady defiance of revolutionary intima-

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¹ Parl. Debates, xxx. p. 615, 620.

interests of all classes that had ever existed in the world ; that least of all could the manufacturing or commercial bodies complain that their interests were not duly attended to in parliament, since the whole policy of the state, for above a century, had been directed, perhaps too exclusively, to their advantage ; that the representation which the great colonial, commercial, and shipping interests now obtained, by means of the purchase of close boroughs, would be annihilated if this mode of entering parliament were closed ; that thus the real effect of reform would be to vest the supreme power in the mob of England, to the exclusion of all the great and varied interests which had risen up over the whole globe in the British dependencies ; that such a state of things had proved fatal to all former republics, and could not fail speedily to lead to the dismemberment of the British empire : that if corruption were the evil which was really apprehended, no mode of increasing it could be so effectual as diminishing the close boroughs, where it existed from the paucity of inhabitants on the smallest, and increasing the middling ones, where experience had proved bribery was practised on the most extensive scale ; that any reform would thus diminish the private to increase the venal boroughs ; that, as it was evident wealth could maintain its ground in the contest with numbers, only by means of the expenditure of money, it was incomparably better that this necessary influence should be exerted in the decent retirement of antiquated boroughs, than in the shameless prostitution of great cities ; that the danger of revolution, so strongly urged on the other side, in fact only existed if the reform measure was carried, inasmuch as history demonstrated, that no convulsions had ever shaken the English monarchy but those which emanated from the House of Commons ; that it was rash measures of legislation which were alone to be dreaded, and words spoken from authority that set the world on fire ; that the constitution had now, by accident, or more probably by the providence of God, become adapted to the curious and complicated interests of the British empire, and had enjoyed a degree of stability unknown to free institutions in any former age ; and therefore nothing could be more rash or culpable than to run the risk of destroying so venerable a fabric, under which so much practical benefit had been experienced, in the pursuit of imaginary and hitherto unattainable perfection.

* Some of these were transported fourteen years for conspiracy and sedition, without any overt act of high treason.—*State Trials in Scotland*, i. 351, 417.

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13.
Prepara-
tions for war
by Great
Britain and
the Allies.

April 20.

Feb. 24.

tion, but cautious consideration of real evils ; decided resistance to needless innovation, but careful abstinence from individual oppression.

The internal tranquillity of the British empire being thus provided for, the government took the most vigorous measures which the limited extent of their military resources would permit, to strengthen the Grand Army on the Continent. A corps, consisting of twenty thousand English, was embarked and landed in Holland, under the command of the Duke of York, and being united to ten thousand Hanoverians and Hessians, formed a total of thirty thousand men in the British pay. The French Convention, early in the year, had ordered a levy of three hundred thousand men ; but these troops could not come into the field till April. The present forces of the Allies consisted of three hundred and sixty-five thousand men, acting on the whole circumference of France, from Calais to Bayonne, while those of the Republicans amounted to two hundred and seventy thousand, for the most part of inferior quality, but possessing the advantages of unity of language, government, and public feeling, besides the important circumstance of acting in an interior and concentric circle, which enabled one corps rapidly to communicate with and support another, while the troops of the Allies, scattered over a much larger circumference, were deprived of that advantage.¹*

¹ Jom. vi.
49, 52.

* The relative strength of the forces on the opposite sides, in July 1793, was as follows :—

	ALLIES.	Men.
Imperialists in Belgium,	50,000
Austrians on the Rhine,	40,000
Do. on the Meuse,	33,000
Prussians in Belgium,	12,000
Prussians and Saxons on the Rhine,	65,000
Dutch,	20,000
English, Hanoverians, and Hessians,	30,000
Austrians and Piedmontese, in Piedmont,	45,000
Spaniards,	50,000
Forces of the Empire and Emigrants,	20,000
Total,	365,000

No difficulty was experienced by government in getting parliament to agree to any measures which were deemed necessary to avert from the British shores the scourge of revolutionary convulsion. The execution of Louis produced a profound and universal impression in Great Britain. Nothing, since the time when the head of Charles I. fell under the axe of the Long Parliament, had ever produced so general and mournful a feeling. It was hard to say whether the sturdy old Tories, or the ardent Liberals of the new school, received the intelligence with most consternation. The former beheld in this event the clearest confirmation of their dismal forebodings, and the realisation of their worst predictions: the latter, the overthrow of long-cherished hopes, the blasting of impassioned and sanguine expectations. It was impossible any longer to represent the popular cause in France as that of justice and philanthropy, when the first sacrifice to which it had led had been that of their upright and beneficent monarch, whose only fault had been an imprudent zeal for the public good, and his only weakness an unconquerable aversion to the shedding of blood. It was now apparent that the boasted regeneration of society had purified it of none of its vices, and that the philanthropic movement of the philosophers was to terminate in the usual atrocities of bloodshed, massacre, and confiscation. Indescribable was the effect

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14.

Vast effect
of the exe-
cution of
Louis in
England.

FRENCH.					Men.
In Belgium and Holland,	30,000
Before Maestricht and in the Limbourg,	.	.	.	.	70,000
On the Moselle,	.	.	.	.	25,000
At Mayence,	.	.	.	.	45,000
On the Upper Rhine,	.	.	.	.	30,000
In Savoy and Nice,	.	.	.	.	40,000
In the Interior,	.	.	.	.	30,000
Total,	.	.	.	.	270,000

The French, however, had the superiority in the field till the end of April; from that time till the end of August, the Allies had the advantage: after which, from the great levies of the Republicans coming forward, they resumed the ascendancy, which went on continually increasing till the close of the campaign, and was never lost till the memorable campaign of 1799.—JOMINI, iii. 51, 52, 53.

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which this impression produced on all classes in the British Isles, from the throne to the cottage. By a spontaneous feeling the House of Commons, on the night on which the melancholy intelligence was discussed in parliament, on occasion of the royal message for an augmentation of the forces, assembled in mourning. One or two alone appeared in coloured dress, who afterwards bore a conspicuous part in English history as the leaders of the great movement which terminated in the Revolution of 1832.*

15.
Effect of the
death of
Louis at St
Petersburg.

The impression made at St Petersburg by the execution of Louis was fully as vivid as at London : already it was evident that these two capitals were the centres of the great contest which was approaching. No sooner did the melancholy intelligence reach the Empress Catherine, than she instantly took the most decisive measures : all Frenchmen were ordered to quit her territories within three weeks, if they did not renounce the principles of the Revolution, and all correspondence with their relations in that country ; and it was publicly announced that the great fleet of Cronstadt, with forty thousand men on board, should, early in spring, unite itself to the British navy, to pursue measures in common against the enemies of humanity. The efforts of the Czarine had been incessant and energetic to organise an alliance capable of restraining the progress of revolutionary principles. With that view she had restrained the uplifted arm of conquest over Gustavus III. of Sweden in 1790 ; and hardly were her troops disengaged from their Turkish enemies on the banks of the Danube, by the peace of Jassy in 1792, than she made arrangements for transporting the Muscovite legions to the heart of Germany.¹

¹ Hard. ii.
191, 192.

Nor did these energetic resolutions evaporate in mere empty words on the part of the cabinet either of St Petersburg or St James's. An intimate and confiden-

* Mr (afterwards Earl) Grey was one of these.—MONITEUR, *January 29, 1793.*

tial correspondence immediately commenced between Count Woronzoff, the Russian ambassador at London, and Lord Grenville, the British secretary of state for foreign affairs, which terminated in a treaty between the two powers, signed in London on the 25th March. By this convention, which laid the basis of the grand alliance which afterwards brought the war to a glorious termination, it was provided that the two powers should "employ their respective forces, as far as circumstances shall permit, in carrying on the just and necessary war in which they find themselves engaged against France ; and they reciprocally engage not to lay down their arms until restitution is compelled of all the conquests which France may have made upon either of the respective powers, or upon such other states or allies to whom, by common consent, they shall extend the benefit of this treaty." They agreed, also, to shut their ports against France, and not permit the export of any naval stores to that power, "and to unite all their efforts to prevent other powers not implicated in this war from giving, on this occasion of common concern to every civilised state, any protection whatever, in consequence of their neutrality, to the commerce or property of the French, on the sea, or in the ports of France." The existing commercial treaties were at the same time, by a separate convention, ratified and confirmed between the two powers.¹

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16.

Treaty between Great Britain and Russia.
March 25.¹ Parl. Hist.
xxx. 1082,
and Hard.
ii. 198.
Martens, v.
433, 439.

Shortly after, a similar convention was entered into between Great Britain and Sardinia, by which the latter power was to receive an annual subsidy of £200,000 during the whole continuance of the war, and to keep on foot an army of fifty thousand men ; and the British government engaged to procure for it entire restitution of its dominions as they stood at the commencement of the war. By another convention with the cabinet of Madrid, signed at Aranjuez on the 25th of May, they engaged not to make peace till they had obtained full restitution for the Spaniards "of all places,

17.
And with
Sardinia,
Prussia,
Naples, and
Spain.
April 25.

May 25.

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July 12.

July 14.
Aug. 30.

Sept. 26.

towns, and territories which belonged to them at the commencement of the war, and which the enemy may have taken during its continuance." A similar treaty was entered into with the court of the two Sicilies, and with Prussia, in which the clauses, prohibiting all exportation to France, and preventing the trade of neutrals with it, were the same as in the Russian treaty. Treaties of the same tenor were concluded in the course of the summer with the Emperor of Germany and the King of Portugal. Thus was all Europe arrayed in a great league against Republican France, and thus did the regicides of that country, as the first fruits of their cruel triumph, find themselves excluded from the pale of civilised nations. It will appear in the sequel how many and what unheard-of disasters broke up this great confederacy; how courageous some were in adhering to their engagements; how weak and dastardly others were in deserting them; and how firmly and nobly Great Britain alone persevered to the end, and never laid down her arms till she had accomplished all the objects of the war, and fulfilled to the very letter all the obligations she had contracted to any, even the humblest, of the allied powers.¹

¹ Martens, v. 469, 473, 483, 519. Parl. Hist. xxx. 1032, 1034, 1048, 1058.

18.
Secret designs of Russia.

But while all Europe thus resounded with the note of military preparation against France, Russia had other and more interested designs in view. Amidst the general consternation at the triumphs of the French Republicans, Catherine conceived that she would be permitted to pursue, without molestation, her ambitious designs against Poland. She constantly represented the disturbances in that kingdom as the fruit of revolutionary propagandism, which it was indispensable to crush in the first instance; and it was easy to see that it was for the banks of the Vistula, not the Seine, that her military preparations were, in the outset at least, intended. The ambitious views of Prussia were also, as will fully appear in the sequel, strongly turned in the same direction;

and thus, in the very commencement of a war which required the concentrated effort of all Europe, and might by such an effort have been speedily brought to a successful termination, were the principal powers already distracted by separate interests, and unjustifiable projects of individual aggrandisement.¹

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¹ Hard. ii.
198, 199.

Nor was it only the ambitious projects of Russia and Prussia against the independence of Poland, which already gave ground for gloomy augury as to the issue of the war. Its issue was more immediately affected by the jealousy between Austria and Prussia, which now broke out in the most undisguised manner, and occasioned such a division of the allied forces as effectually prevented any cordial or effective co-operation continuing to exist between them. The Prussian cabinet, mortified at the lead which the Imperial generals took in the common operations, insisted upon the formation of two independent German armies,—one composed of Prussians, the other of Austrians, to one or other of which the forces of all the minor states should be joined: those of Saxony, Hanover, and Hesse, being grouped round the standards of Prussia; those of Bavaria, Würtemberg, Suabia, the Palatinate, and Franconia, following the eagles of Austria. By this means all unity of action between the two grand allied armies was broken up, at the very time when it was most required to meet the desperate and concentrated energy of revolutionary fervour; while the zeal of all the subordinate nations was irretrievably cooled, at finding themselves thus parcelled out between the two great military powers whose pre-eminence already gave them so much disquietude, and compelled against their will to serve under the standards of empires from whom many of them apprehended greater danger than from the common enemy.²

19.
Divisions
between the
Prussians
and Aus-
trians.

² Hard. ii.
200, 202.

But though such seeds of weakness existed among the allied powers, the immediate danger was to all appearance much greater to France. Though their armies in Flanders

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1793.

20.

Wretched
state of the
French
armies at
the com-
mencement
of the cam-
paign.

were, in the commencement of the campaign, superior to those of the Allies, they were in the most deplorable state of insubordination, and miserably deficient in every species of equipment. The artillery horses had in great part perished during the severity of the winter campaign: the clothing of the soldiers was worn out; their spirit had disappeared during the license of Republican conquest. The disorganisation was complete in every department: the artillery stores, the commissariat, the cavalry horses, were deficient; discipline was wanting among the soldiers, concord among the chiefs. France then experienced the weakness arising from revolutionary license, and which is common to all really democratic states. She regained her strength under the stern despotism of the Reign of Terror, when the Committee of Public Salvation wielded a power tenfold greater than Louis XIV. had ever enjoyed, and enforced with a rigour unknown to Caligula or Nero.¹

¹ Toul. iii.
239. Jom.
iii. 49, 52.

21.

Prince Co-
bourg ap-
pointed ge-
neralissimo
of the Allies.

Prince Cobourg was appointed generalissimo of the allied armies from the Rhine to the German Ocean. The great abilities displayed by Clairfait in repairing the disasters of the preceding campaign, pleaded in vain for his continuance in the command at a court not yet taught by disaster to disregard influence and promote only merit. His successor had served under the Imperial banners against the Turks, and shared in the glories of the campaigns of Suwarroff. But the Austrian commander was far from possessing the vigour or capacity of the conqueror of Ismael. Adhering with obstinate perseverance to the system of dividing his forces, and covering an immense tract of country with communications, he frittered away the vast army placed at his disposal, and permitted the fairest opportunity ever offered of striking a decisive blow against the rising Republic, to pass away without any important event.² He belonged to the old methodical school of Lacey; was destitute alike of decision and character; and, from the tardiness of his

² Jom. iii.
62. Hard.
ii. 204, 205.

operations, was the general of all others least qualified to combat the fire and energy of a revolution.

To support the prodigious expense of a war on all their frontiers, and on so great a scale, would have much exceeded the ordinary and legitimate resources of the French government. But, contrary alike to precedent and anticipation, they derived from the miseries and convulsions of the Revolution new and unparalleled resources. The ordinary pacific expenditure of 1792, covered by taxes, the sale of ecclesiastical property, and patriotic gifts, amounted to 958,000,000 francs, or nearly £40,000,000 sterling. But so immensely had the charges of the war augmented the national expenditure, that the expense of the last period of the year was at the rate of 200,000,000 francs, or £8,000,000 a-month. On the day on which war was declared, assignats to the enormous amount of 1,000,000,000 francs (£40,000,000) were struck off at the public treasury. But the period had now arrived when all calculation in matters of finance was to cease. For all exigencies the inexhaustible mine of assignats, possessing a forced circulation, and issued on the credit of the national domains, proved sufficient. When any want was felt in the treasury, the demands were paid by a fresh issue of paper; and this fictitious currency, the source of boundless private ruin in France, singly sustained, during the first years of the revolutionary wars, the public credit. In the Finance Report for 1793, Cambon declared that the expenses of that year could admit of no exact calculation, but that the nation must rise superior to its financial, as it had already risen above its military difficulties; and therefore he proposed the immediate issue of 800,000,000 of francs, or upwards of £33,000,000, in assignats, on the security of the national domains, which was immediately agreed to. These domains he valued at eight milliards, or about £320,000,000, sterling; of which three milliards, or £120,000,000, had been consumed or impledged by previous issues,¹—an

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22.

Vast efforts
of France.

¹ Toul. iii.
248, 250.
Hist. Parl.
xxiv. 132,
137.

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extraordinary proof of the length to which the confiscation of private property had already been carried under the revolutionary government.

23.
Mr Pitt's
financial
measures.

To meet the exigencies of the year in the British parliament, Mr Pitt proposed a loan of £4,500,000, besides the ordinary supplies of the year, the interest of which was provided for by additional taxes ; and from these resources the subsidy already mentioned was granted to the King of Sardinia, and others to several of the smaller German powers. At the same time an issue of £5,000,000 was voted to relieve the commercial embarrassment, which had been very severely felt on the breaking out of the war ; and such was the effect of this well-timed supply that credit was speedily restored, and little, if any, of this large sum was ultimately lost to the state—a striking example of the beneficial effect of liberal support by government, even in the darkest periods of public suffering.¹

¹ Parl. Hist.
xxx. 972.

24.
Designs of
Dumourier,
and of the
allied gene-
rals.

In January 1793, Dumourier came to Paris, in order to endeavour to rouse the Girondist party to save the life of Louis. This movement, while it failed in its object of preserving the King, for ever alienated the Jacobins from the general. The consequences of this misunderstanding were important upon the fate of the campaign. Dumourier's plan, which he had been meditating during the whole winter, was to commence operations by an invasion of Holland ; to revolutionise that country, unite it with the provinces of Flanders—as has since been done in 1814—raise an army of eighty thousand men, with this force move upon Paris, and, without the aid of any other power, dictate laws to the Convention, and restore tranquillity to France. It is one of the most extraordinary signs of those days of revolution and confusion, that so wild a project should have been seriously undertaken by a man of his acute understanding. On the other hand, the plan of the Allies was to drive the Republicans beyond the Meuse, and disengage the important fortress of

Maestricht; next to invest and regain the city of Mayence, the key of the Rhine, and then unite their victorious forces for the deliverance of Flanders. The design, in general, was well conceived; but the details prescribed for the recovery of the Low Countries were vitiated by that division of force, and mutual jealousy of the commanders, which so long proved ruinous to the allied armies. To carry into execution his project, Dumourier, early in the season, collected a body of about twenty thousand men at Antwerp, with a view to an attack on Rotterdam. Shortly after his troops entered the Dutch territory, and established themselves between Breda and Bergen-op-zoom. At first his efforts were attended with unexpected success. After a siege of three days, and when the French were on the point of retiring for want of ammunition, Breda, with a garrison of twenty-five hundred men, capitulated. This advantage was speedily followed by the reduction of Gertruydenberg, after a trifling resistance; and siege was immediately laid to Williamstadt. The French forces, encamped in straw huts on the shores of the branch of the sea called the Brisboes, were only waiting for the collection of boats sufficient to convey across the troops, in order to undertake the siege of Dort, when information was received by the general, on the night of the 8th March, of events in other quarters of Flanders, which immediately led to the abandonment of this enterprise.¹

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1793.

Feb. 5.

Feb. 17.

March 3.

¹ Jom. iii.
64, 85.
Toul. iii.
262. Dum.
iv. 4, 14.

While Dumourier was absent with part of his forces in Holland, Miranda was prosecuting the siege of Maestricht, though with forces totally inadequate to so great an undertaking. But while the French were still reposing in fancied security in their cantonments, the Imperialists were taking active measures to raise the siege. Fifty-two thousand men had been assembled under Prince Cobourg, with whom was the young ARCHDUKE CHARLES, brother of the Emperor Francis,* at the head of the grenadiers.

25.
Archduke
Charles
joins the
army. Re-
peated dis-
asters of the
Republi-
cans.

* Charles Louis de Lorraine, Archduke Charles, second brother of the

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1793.

March 2
and 3.

March 6.

March 8.

¹ Toul. iii.
270. Jom.
iii. 86, 94,
96, 99.

On the 1st and 2d March, the Austrians along the whole line attacked the French cantonments, and, after an inconsiderable resistance, succeeded in driving them back, and in many points throwing them into utter confusion. The discouragement which has so often been observed to seize the French troops on the first considerable reverse, got possession of the soldiers; whole battalions fled in confusion into France; officers quitted their troops, soldiers disbanded from their officers; the siege of Maestricht was raised, the heavy artillery sent back in haste towards Brussels, and the army driven in disorder beyond the Meuse, with the loss of seven thousand men in killed, wounded, and prisoners. On the 4th March, the Republicans were again routed near Liege, and a large portion of the heavy artillery abandoned under that city: a few days after, Tongres was carried by the Archduke Charles, at the head of twelve thousand men; and the whole army fell back upon Tirlemont, and thence to Louvain, where Dumourier arrived from the Dutch frontier, and resumed the command. The Imperialists then desisted from the pursuit, satisfied with their first success, and not deeming themselves sufficiently strong to force the united corps of the French army in that city.¹

The intelligence of these repeated disasters produced the utmost sensation in the whole of Flanders. The Republican party, already disgusted with the exactions

Emperor Francis, was born on the 15th September 1771, so that when he first entered on the career of arms under Prince Cobourg, in May 1793, he was not yet twenty-two years of age. His great abilities, not less than his exalted rank, rapidly procured his elevation in command. After the battle of Nerwinde, which restored that rich province to the Imperial power, he was appointed governor of the Low Countries, and was soon after created a field-marshal. In April 1796, he was promoted, on the retirement of Clairfait, to the command of the Imperial armies in Germany, where his military abilities, as will appear in the sequel, shone forth with the highest lustre, and which laid the foundation of his great military reputation. His character will come more fitly to be drawn in a subsequent volume, when his great exploits have been recounted, as well as advantage taken of the luminous and impartial narrative he has left of his campaigns, and the profound views with which he has enriched the science of strategy.—See *infra*, c. xxviii. §§ 92, 93; *Biographie des Contemporains*, ii. 134.

and plunder of the French commissioners, now found themselves threatened with the immediate vengeance of their sovereign, and chastisement from the allied forces. The decree of the Convention, uniting the Flemish provinces to the French Republic, had excited the utmost discontent in the whole country; the spoliation of the churches, forced requisitions, imprisonments, and abuses of every kind, which had gone on during the winter, had roused such a universal spirit of resistance, that a general insurrection was hourly expected, and a body of ten thousand peasants had already assembled in the neighbourhood of Ghent, and defeated the detachments of the garrison of that city which had been sent against them. To endeavour to remedy these disorders, and restore the shaken attachment of the Flemings, was the first care of Dumourier. For this purpose he had a conference at Louvain, shortly after his arrival, with Camus, and the other commissioners of the Convention; but it ended in nothing but mutual recriminations. Dumourier reproached them with having authorised and permitted the exactions and disorders which had roused such a ferment in the conquered provinces; and they retaliated by accusing him of entertaining designs subversive of the liberty of the people. It concluded thus: "General," said Camus, "you are accused of wishing to become Cæsar: could I feel assured of it, I would act the part of Brutus, and stab you to the heart."—"My dear Camus," replied he, "I am neither Cæsar, nor are you Brutus; and the menace you have uttered is, to me, a passport to immortality." Dumourier found the army—which, notwithstanding the detachment of twenty thousand men in Holland, twelve thousand at Namur, and five thousand in another direction, was still forty-five thousand strong, including four thousand five hundred cavalry—in the utmost state of disorder; the confusion of defeat having been superadded to that of Republican license. He immediately reorganised it in a different manner, and in order to restore the

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1793.

26.

Great sensation produced by them in Flanders, and efforts of Dumourier.

March 13.

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1793.

1 Dum. iv.
66, 67, 80.
81. Toul.
iii. 272.

confidence of the soldiers, resolved to commence offensive operations. In a few days the French advanced-guard defeated the Austrians near Tirlemont, with the loss of twelve hundred men; an event which immediately restored confidence to the whole army, and confirmed the general in his resolution to risk a general action.¹

27.

Battle of
Nerwinde or
Neerwin-
den.

March 18.

The Imperialists had thirty-nine thousand men, of whom nine thousand were horse, posted near Tirlemont. Resolved not to decline a combat, they concentrated their forces along a position, about two leagues in length, near the village of NERWINDE or NEERWINDEN. The right, commanded by the Archduke Charles, was posted across the *chaussée* leading to Tirlemont; the left, under the orders of Clairfait, extended towards Oberwinden; the centre, in two lines, was under the command of General Colloredo and the Prince of Würtemberg. On the other hand, the French army was divided into eight columns; three of which, under Miranda, were destined to attack the right; two, under the Duke of Chartres, to force the centre; and three, under Valence, to overwhelm the left. The action began by an attack on the Austrian left, by the troops under the command of Valence, which advanced in dense columns, and at first succeeded in carrying the villages immediately in front of their position; but the Austrians having directed a severe and concentric fire of artillery on that point, the advance of the masses was checked, and disorder and irresolution introduced into their ranks. Meanwhile, the village of Nerwinde was carried by the Republicans in the centre, but was shortly after regained by the Austrians; and after being frequently taken and retaken, it was finally evacuated by the French, who were unable to sustain the severe and incessant fire of the Imperial artillery.²

2 Prince
Cobourg's
Despatch,
Dum. iv. 88,
97. Jom.
iii. 105, 110.
Toul. iii.
279.

28.

Defeat of
the French.

Dumourier, upon this, formed his line a hundred yards in rear of the village, when the Austrians immediately pushed on and assailed the infantry by two columns of cuirassiers: but the first was repulsed by the murderous

fire of grape from the French artillery ; and the second checked, after a severe engagement, by the Republican cavalry. The combat now ceased on the French right and centre ; but on the left affairs had taken a very different turn. The French, under Miranda, there endeavoured in vain to debouch from the village of Orsmael, which they had occupied ; the heads of their columns, as fast as they presented themselves, were swept off by the fire of the Austrian artillery, placed on the heights immediately behind ; and shortly after the Archduke Charles, at the head of two battalions, stormed the villages ; and Prince Cobourg, perceiving this to be the important point, attacked the French columns with a small body of cavalry and infantry, under the Duke of Würtemberg, in flank, while the Archduke pressed their front. The result was, that the French left wing was routed, and would have been totally destroyed, had the Duke of Würtemberg charged with the whole forces under his command, instead of the inconsiderable part which achieved this important success. The Republicans, however, alarmed at this disaster, retired from the field of battle, and regained, with some difficulty, the ground they had occupied before the engagement. In this battle the Austrians lost two thousand men, and the French two thousand five hundred killed and wounded, and fifteen hundred prisoners ; but it decided the fate of the campaign. Dumourier, aided by the young Duke of Chartres, conducted the retreat in the evening with much ability, and in good order, without being seriously disquieted by the enemy. A few days after the Austrians advanced, and on the 22d, under cover of a thick mist, made an unexpected attack on the French rearguard ; but they were repulsed, after a trifling success, with loss.¹

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¹ Dum. iv.
88, 90, 97,
101. Jom.
iii. 105, 111,
112, 117.
Toul. iii.
279, 288,
290, 293.

The position of the French commander, however, was now extremely critical. To conduct a long retreat with discouraged troops, in the face of a victorious enemy, is at

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XIII.1793.
29.Disorgani-
sation of
the French
army, and
retreat of
Dumourier.

all times dangerous ; but it was in an especial manner so at that juncture, in consequence of the undisciplined state of a large part of his forces, and the undisguised manner in which the volunteers left their colours upon the first serious reverse. The national guards openly declared that they had taken up arms to save their country, not to get themselves massacred in Flanders ; and whole companies and battalions, with their arms and baggage, went off towards the French frontier. To such a height did the discouragement attain, that within a few days after the battle six thousand men had left their colours, and disbanded, spreading dismay over all the roads leading to France. Naturally brave and active, the French troops are the best in the world to advance and gain conquests ; but they have not, till inured by discipline and experience, the steadiness requisite to preserve them. By the threatened defection of the volunteer corps, Dumourier was exposed to the loss of more than half his army, while the open plains of Flanders, now destitute of fortified places, offered no points of defence capable of arresting the progress of a victorious army. Influenced by these considerations, the French general everywhere prepared for a retreat. Orders were despatched to General Harville to throw a garrison of two thousand men into the citadel of Namur, and move with the remainder of his corps, consisting of twelve thousand men, towards Brussels ; while the troops advanced, by the imprudent invasion of Holland, as far as Gertruydenberg and Breda, were directed to retire upon Antwerp and Mechlin. Prince Cobourg in vain urged the Dutch and Prussian troops to disquiet their retreat ; contenting themselves with investing Breda and Gertruydenberg, they remained, with a force of thirty thousand men, in a state of perfect inaction.¹

¹ Jom. iii.
121, 125.
Dum. iv.
98, 104,
105, 115.

30.
Convention
with Prince
Cobourg.

Shortly after conferences were opened between Dumourier and the Austrian generals, in virtue of which it was agreed that the French should retire behind Brussels, without being disquieted in their retreat. It soon ap-

peared how essential such an arrangement was to the Republican arms. On the following day, Clairfait, who was ignorant of the convention, attacked General Lamarche, who fell back in confusion behind Louvain, and left an opening in the retreating columns, which, with a more enterprising enemy, might have been attended with ruinous results. The troops then gave themselves up to despair, and openly threatened to disband. Dumourier himself has confessed, that his troops were in such a state of disorder, that, if vigorously pressed, they must have been totally annihilated in the long retreat which lay before them, before they regained the French frontiers. Yet so ignorant was the Austrian commander of the condition of his adversary, that he was unaware of a state of debility, confusion, and weakness, which was notorious to every peasant who beheld the retreating columns. In virtue of the convention, the French army, without further delay, evacuated Brussels and Mechlin, and retired in good order, by Hall, Mons, and Ath, towards the French frontier. At the same time the Republicans retired along the whole line from Gertruydenberg to Namur, and withdrew the garrison from the citadel of the latter place.¹

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1793.

March 23.

March 25
and 26.

¹ Toul. iii.
295. Dum.
iv. 109, 111.
Jom. iii. 126,
127. Hard.
ii. 241, 251.

But it soon appeared that in these movements Dumourier had more than mere military objects in view. It was at Ath, on the 27th March, that the first conference of a political nature took place, and it was verbally agreed between the French commander, and Colonel Mack on the part of the Imperialists, "That the French army should repose a little at Mons and Tournay without being disquieted, and that Dumourier, who was to judge of the proper time for marching to Paris, should regulate the movements of the Austrians, who were to act only as auxiliaries; that if he could not, by his single forces, effect the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, he should fix upon the amount of the allied forces which he would require; and that the fortress of Condé should

^{31.}
Political designs, failure, and flight of Dumourier.

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1793.

be placed in the hands of the Imperialists as a guarantee, to be restored to France after a general peace." Having thus embarked in the perilous undertaking of overturning the republican and re-establishing monarchical government, Dumourier's first care was to secure the fortresses, upon which the success of his enterprise depended. But here his ill-fortune began. The officer whom he despatched to take possession of Lille, suffered himself to be made the dupe of the commander of that place, and led a prisoner into the fortress ; the garrisons of Condé and Valenciennes successfully resisted all attempts to bring them over to the constitutional party ; and the Convention, taking the alarm, despatched Camus, and three other commissioners, with the minister at war, Beurnonville, with orders to the general to appear at the bar of the Convention, and answer for his conduct. After an angry discussion, the particulars of which have been already given,* Dumourier arrested the deputies, and delivered them over to the Austrians ; but he was speedily deserted by his own soldiers, narrowly escaped being made prisoner by a detachment of grenadiers faithful to the Convention, commanded by Davoust, and obliged to fly from his camp at St Amand, and take refuge, with fifteen hundred followers, in the Austrian lines. Restrained either by a sense of honour arising from the recent convention, or by the inherent slowness of their disposition, the Austrians made no attempt to improve the opportunity afforded by the defection of the French commander. The Republicans were permitted quietly to retire to Valenciennes, Lille, and Condé ; a considerable number formed an intrenched camp at Famars, where, by orders of the Convention, general Dampierre assumed the command, and sedulously endeavoured to restore the discipline and revive the spirit which so many disasters had greatly weakened among the soldiers.¹

¹ Hard. ii.
217, 219.
Toul. iii.
308, 319.
Jom. iii.
132, 135,
137, 152.
April 5.

A congress was assembled at Antwerp of the ministers

of the allied powers, which was attended by Counts Metternich* and Stahrenberg on the part of Austria, Lord Auckland on that of England, and Count Keller on that of Prussia. Such was the confidence inspired by recent events, that these ministers all imagined that the last days of the Convention were at hand: and in truth they were so, if the allied cabinets had communicated a little more vigour and unanimity into the military operations. Inspired by these ideas, and irritated at the total failure of Dumourier's attempt to subvert the anarchical rule in that country, the plenipotentiaries came to the resolution of totally altering the object of the war, and the necessity was now openly announced of providing *indemnities and securities* for the allied powers; in other words, partitioning the frontier territories of France among the invading states. The effect of this resolution was immediately conspicuous in a proclamation which Prince Cobourg issued to the French people, in which he openly disavowed, on the part of his government, those resolutions to abstain from all aggrandisement which he had announced only a few days before, and declared that he was ordered to prosecute the contest by might of arms with all the forces at his disposal.† The effects of this unhappy resolution were soon apparent.¹ When Valenciennes and Condé were taken, the standard, not of

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1793.

32.

Congress at
Antwerp to
decide on
the conduct
of the war.¹ Hard. ii.
238, 241.

* Father of the great statesman of the same name, who rose to such eminence during the Revolutionary war.

† In his first proclamation, on 5th April, issued during the conferences with Dumourier, Cobourg declared, "Desirous only of securing the prosperity and glory of a country torn by so many convulsions, I declare that I shall support, with all the forces at my disposal, the generous and beneficent intentions of General Dumourier and his brave army. I declare that our only object is to restore to France its constitutional monarch, with the means of rectifying such experienced abuses as may exist, and to give to France, as to Europe, peace, confidence, tranquillity, and happiness. In conformity with these principles, I declare on my word of honour, that I enter the French territory without any intention of making conquests, but solely and entirely for these purposes. I declare also, on my word of honour, that if military operations should lead to any place of strength being placed in my hands, I shall regard it in no other light than as a *sacred deposit*; and I bind myself in the most solemn manner to restore it to the government which may be established in France, or as

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1793.

Louis XVII., but of Austria, was hoisted on the walls, and the allied ministers already talked openly of indemnities for the past, and securities for the future.

33.
Disastrous
effects of the
system then
resolved on.

No step in the early stages of the war was ever attended with more unfortunate consequences. It at once changed the character of the contest—converted it from one of liberation into one of aggrandisement, and gave the Jacobins of Paris too good reason for their assertion, that the dismemberment of the country was intended, and that all true citizens must join heart and hand in resisting the common enemy. The true principle to have adopted would have been that so strongly recommended by Mr Burke, and which afterwards proved so successful in the hands of Alexander and Wellington, viz., to have separated distinctly and emphatically the cause of France from that of the Jacobin faction which had enthralled it : to have guaranteed the integrity of the former, and denounced implacable hostility only against the latter ; and thus afforded the means to the great body of patriotic citizens who were adverse to the sanguinary rule of the Convention, of extricating themselves at once from domestic tyranny and foreign subjugation.¹

¹ Hard. ii.
238, 241.
Burke, Reg.
Peace.

The British contingent, twenty thousand strong, having landed at Rotterdam, the allied army in Flanders, under

soon as the brave general with whom I make common cause shall demand it." These are the principles of the true anti-revolutionary war ; but they were strangely departed from in the proclamation issued a few days later by the same general, after the determination of the Congress at Antwerp had been taken. Prince Cobourg there said,—“ The proclamation of the 5th instant was the expression only of my *personal* sentiments ; and I there announced my *individual* views for the safety and tranquillity of France. But now that the results of that declaration have proved so different from what I anticipated, the same candour obliges me to declare that the state of hostility between the Emperor and the French nation is unhappily re-established in its full extent. It remains for me, therefore, only to *revoke my said declaration*, and to announce that I shall prosecute the war with the utmost vigour. Nothing remains binding of my first proclamation, but the declaration, which I renew with pleasure, that the strictest discipline shall be observed by my troops in all parts of the French territory which they may occupy.” Stronger evidence of the unhappy change of system cannot be imagined.—See HARDENBERG, ii. 231, 233, 241, 243.

Cobourg, was raised to above ninety thousand men, besides a detached corps of thirty thousand Austrians, stationed at Namur, Luxembourg, and Treves, to keep open the communication with the Prussian army destined to act against Mayence. Alarmed at the great peril they had sustained by the defection of Dumourier, and by this vast accumulation of force, the Convention took the most vigorous measures to provide for the public safety. A camp of forty thousand men was decreed, to form a reserve for the army; the levy of three hundred thousand men, ordered by the decree of 24th February, was directed to be hastened, and sixty representatives of the Convention were named, to serve as viceroys over the generals in all the armies. No less than twelve of these haughty Republicans were commanded to proceed to the Army of the North. No limit existed to their authority. Armed with the despotic powers of the Committee of Public Salvation, supported by a Republican and mutinous soldiery, they, with equal facility, placed the generals on a triumphal car, or despatched them to the scaffold. Disposing with absolute sway of the lives and arms of several millions of Frenchmen, they were staggered by no losses, intimidated by no difficulties. To press on, and bear down opposition by the force of numbers, was the system on which they invariably acted, and, disposing with an unsparing hand of the blood of a bankrupt but enthusiastic nation in arms, they found resources for the maintenance of such a murderous system of warfare which never could have been commanded by any regular government.¹

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.

34.

Forces of
the Allies in
Flanders,
and defen-
sive mea-
sures of the
Convention.

¹ Jom. iii.
146, 151.
Toul. iv. 4.

While these disastrous events were occurring on the northern, fortune was not more propitious to the arms of the Republic on its eastern frontier. The forces of the French in that quarter, at the opening of the campaign, were greatly overmatched by those of the Allies; between the Prussians and Austrians, there were not less than seventy-five thousand men on the Rhine in February,

35.

Defeat on
the Rhine of
Custine's
projects.

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.

March 24.

March 31.

¹ Toul. iii.
322, 325.
Jom. iii.
187, 202,
205.

36.
Siege of
Mayence by
the Allies,
and defeat of
the attack
on the cover-
ing army.

May 17.

besides twenty thousand between Treves and the Meuse ; while Custine had only forty-five thousand in the field, twenty-two thousand of these being under his immediate command, the remainder stationed on the Meuse ; and the whole forces on the Upper Rhine, including the garrisons, did not exceed forty thousand, of whom not more than a half were available for service in the field. The campaign was opened, after some inconsiderable actions, on the 24th March, by the King of Prussia crossing the Rhine in great force at Rheinfels. An ineffectual resistance was attempted by the army of Custine, but the superiority of the allied forces compelled him to fall back ; and after some days' retreat, and several partial actions, he retired first to Landau, and thence behind the river Lauter, and took post in the famous lines of Weissenburg. Mayence was now left to its own resources, with a great train of heavy artillery, and a garrison of twenty thousand men ; while Custine, whose force was augmented by the garrisons in Alsace to thirty-five thousand men, remained strictly on the defensive in the Vosges mountains and his fortified position.¹

The Allies immediately made preparations for the reduction of this great fortress ; but, by an inconceivable fatuity, the superb siege equipage, which was on the road from Austria, was sent on to Valenciennes, while the supplies requisite for the attack on Mayence were brought from Holland—an exchange which occasioned great delays in both undertakings, and proved extremely injurious to the future progress of the allied arms. The garrison, though so numerous, was not furnished with the whole artillery requisite for arming the extensive works ; but its spirit was excellent, and the most vigorous resistance was to be anticipated. Little progress took place in the operations during the first two months, and on the 17th May, a general attack was made on the covering force by Custine's army, supported by fourteen thousand men from the corps of the Moselle, under General Houchard. But

the movements of the troops were ill combined ; part of them were seized with a disgraceful panic, and the attack proved entirely abortive. After this failure, Custine was removed to the command of the Army of the North, now severely pressed by the allied forces near Valenciennes ; and the forces in the lines of Weissenburg remained under the orders of Beauharnais, without attempting anything of importance till a later period of the campaign. The inactivity and irresolution of the Allies in these operations, and the little advantage which they derived from their superiority of force, and the wretched condition of their opponents, proves how grievously they stood in need of a leader capable of conducting such a contest.¹

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.

¹ Toul. iv.
15, 16. Jom.
iii. 209, 213,
225. Hard.
ii. 257, 258,
259, 298.

At length the operations of the siege, long delayed from the tardiness in the approach of the heavy train, were pushed with activity. Trenches having been regularly constructed, fifteen batteries were armed on the 1st July, and a heavy fire from above two hundred pieces of cannon was opened upon the body of the place, the garrison of which, after a blockade of two months, began to be severely straitened for provisions. On the 16th a great magazine of forage took fire, and was consumed ; and the destruction of several mills augmented the difficulties of the besieged, who now found their great numbers the principal difficulty with which they had to contend. A capitulation, therefore, by which the garrison should be withdrawn to some quarter where their services might be of more value to the Republic, was agreed to, and the 22d July fixed on as the day for its accomplishment. While this was going on within the city, the army of Beauharnais, urged by repeated orders from the Convention, was at length taking measures for its deliverance. Early in July, the Republicans broke up from the lines of Weissenburg, and, after a variety of slow movements, a general attack took place on the 19th, on the whole allied position, over an extent of nearly thirty leagues.

^{37.}
Fall of May-
ence, and
defeat of the
French in
attempting
to raise the
siege.
July 1.

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.
July 22.

But the efforts of the French, feeble and ill conducted, led to no result, and, in the midst of their complicated movements, Mayence surrendered on the 22d. The Duke of Brunswick, rejoiced at finding himself extricated, by this event, from a situation which, with more daring adversaries, would have been full of peril, accorded favourable terms to the garrison ; they were permitted to march out with their arms and baggage, on condition of not serving against the Allies for a year ; a stipulation of ruinous consequences to the Royalist party, as it disengaged seventeen thousand veteran soldiers, who were forthwith sent against the insurgents in La Vendée. The Republicans, finding the city taken, fell back in disorder, and regained the lines of Weissenburg in such confusion as indicated rather a total rout than an indecisive offensive movement.¹ *

¹ Hard. ii.
296, 319.
Jom. iii.
235, 252.

38.
The French
in Flanders
forced back
to Famars.
April 25.

While these events were taking place on the Rhine, the war was gradually assuming a more decisive character on the Flemish frontier. The congress which had been held at Antwerp, for arranging the plan of the campaign, having at length resolved upon the operations which were to be pursued, and the British contingent having joined the line at the end of April, the Archduke Charles entered in triumph into Brussels, the people of which, with the usual inconstancy of the multitude, gave him as flattering a reception as had attended the entrance of the Republicans a few months before. The allied generals, however, were far from improving the advantages afforded by the defection of Dumourier, and the extreme dejection of the French army ; their forces were not put in motion till the beginning of May, before which the French had so far recovered from their consternation as to have

* Already it had become evident that the Prussians were secretly inclined towards the French, and that, after the capture of Mayence, they would withdraw as soon as they could from the contest. During the siege, a negotiation for the exchange of prisoners was carried on between "the *French Republic* and the King of Prussia;" and such was the temper of the officers that, when the fortress was taken, they caused the Marseillaise hymn to be sung in the hotels where they lodged.—See HARDENBERG, ii. 303-319.

actually resumed the offensive. Disposing of a splendid army of one hundred and twenty thousand men, Cobourg did nothing to disquiet the retreat of thirty thousand Republicans, disordered and dejected, to their own frontiers, and allowed them, by his extreme tardiness, to be reinforced by numerous levies from the interior before he attempted to follow up his successes. On the 1st May 1. May, a general attack was made by General Dampierre on the allied position ; but the Republicans were driven back to their camp at Famars, with the loss of two thousand men and a large quantity of artillery. On the 8th, a more serious action took place. The French attacked the Allies along their whole line, extending to nine leagues, with forces greatly inferior ; but they were everywhere unsuccessful except at the wood of Vicogne, where the Prussians were forced back, until the arrival of the English Guards changed the face of affairs. These gallant corps drove back the French with the loss of four thousand men, and re-established the Allies in their position. In this action the brave General Dampierre was killed. This was the first time that the English and French soldiers were brought into collision in the war : little did either party contemplate the terrible contest which awaited them, before it was terminated, within a few miles of the same place, on the plain of Waterloo.¹

CHAP.
XIII.
1793.

¹ Toul. iv.
6. Hard. ii.
240, 251.
Jom. iii.
149, 160,
163. Ann.
Reg. 1793,
p. 169.

These repeated disasters convinced the Republicans of the necessity of remaining on the defensive, and striving only to prevent the siege of those great towns which had been fortified for the protection of the frontier. But the Allies, having now accumulated eighty thousand men in front of Valenciennes, resolved to make a general attack on the intrenched camp which covered that important city. The assault was fixed for the 23d, and was conducted by two grand columns, seconded by several partial demonstrations. The first column consisted of sixteen thousand men, under the Duke of York ; the second, of eleven thousand men, was placed under the orders of General

39.
Storming of
the camp at
Famars.

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.

Ferrari. A thick fog at first concealed the hostile armies from each other, but soon after daybreak it rose like a curtain, and discovered the Republican lines posted in front of their intrenchments, and defended by a numerous artillery. The English troops under Abercromby, forming part of Ferrari's corps, advanced along with the Germans under Walmoden, crossed the Ronelle, and carried some of the redoubts of the camp, notwithstanding a vehement fire from the French artillery. The attack of the Duke of York having also been followed by the capture of three redoubts, and the whole allied army being advanced close to the intrenchments, the French resolved not to wait the issue of an assault on the following day, but evacuated their position during the night, and fell back to the famous camp of Cæsar, leaving Valenciennes to its fate. The Allies on this occasion lost a very favourable opportunity of bringing the war to a termination. Cobourg had eighty thousand men in the field; the French had not fifty thousand: had he acted with vigour, and followed up his advantage, he might have destroyed the Republican army, and marched at the head of an irresistible force to Paris. But at that period, neither the allied cabinets nor generals were capable of such a resolution. The former looked only to a war of conquest and acquisition against France, in which the great object was to secure their advantages; the latter to a slow methodical campaign, similar to that pursued in ordinary times against a regular government.¹

¹ Hard. ii. 286-7. Toul. iv. 10, 13. Jom. iii. 165, 170. Ann. Reg. 1793, 169.

40.
Valenci-
ennes and
Condé in-
vested, and
the former
taken.
June 14.

It was immediately determined by the Allies to form the sieges of Valenciennes and Condé. The army of observation, thirty thousand strong, encamped near Herinnes, fronting Bouchain, while a corps of equal strength under the Duke of York was intrusted with the conduct of the siege. The garrison of the former, consisting of nine thousand men, made a gallant defence; but the operations of the besiegers were conducted with the greatest activity, and ere long crowned with success. On the 14th June the trenches

were opened, and above two hundred and fifty pieces of heavy cannon, with ninety mortars, kept up a vigorous and incessant fire upon the works and the city. Upon the unfortunate inhabitants the tempest fell with unmitigated severity, and several parts of the town were speedily in flames; but they bore their sufferings with great resignation, till the pangs of hunger began to be added to the terrors of the bombardment. Ultimately the approaches of the besiegers were chiefly carried on by their subterranean operations. During the whole of July, the mines were pushed with the greatest activity, and on the 25th, three great globes of compression were ready to be fired under the covered way; while two columns, the first composed of English, the second of Germans, were prepared to take advantage of the confusion, and assault the ruins. At nine at night the globes were sprung with a prodigious explosion, and the assaulting columns immediately rushed forward with loud shouts, cleared the palisades of the covered way, pursued the Republicans into the interior works, where they spiked the cannon and dislodged the garrison, but were unable to maintain their ground from the fire of the place. The outworks, however, being now in great part carried, and the consternation of the citizens having risen to the highest pitch, from the prospect of an approaching assault, the governor, on the 28th, was obliged to capitulate. The garrison, by this time reduced to seven thousand men, marched out with the honours of war, laid down its arms, and was permitted to retire to France, on condition of not again serving against the Allies. It was employed, like that of Mayence, in the war against the Royalists in La Vandée and Toulon, and there rendered essential service to the Republican arms.¹

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.

July 28.

¹ Jomini, iv.
171, 174,
181. Toul.
iv. 42, 43.

In this siege, the operations on both sides were conducted with great vigour and ability; and the French artillery even surpassed its ancient renown. The Allies threw eighty-four thousand cannon-balls, twenty thousand shells, and forty-eight thousand bombs, into the town.

41.
Blockade
and capitu-
lation of
Condé.

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.

July 13.

¹ Toul. iv.
32. Jom.
iii. 181.42.
These places
taken pos-
session of
in name of
the Empe-
ror of Aus-
tria.

The governor, General Ferrand, was arrested and brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal, and, but for the intervention of a commissioner of the Convention, would have forfeited his life for a defence highly honourable in itself, and which in the end aided the salvation of France, by the time which it afforded for the completion of the armaments in the interior. The siege, or rather blockade, of Condé, was less distinguished by remarkable events. After an obstinate resistance, it capitulated a short time before Valenciennes, the garrison having exhausted all their means of subsistence. By this event, 3000 men were made prisoners, and an important fortress gained to the allied forces.¹

The capitulation of these two fortresses brought to light the fatal change in the object and policy of the war which had been agreed upon at the Congress of Antwerp. All Europe was in anxious suspense, awaiting the official announcement of the intentions of the Allies, by the use which they made of their first considerable conquests; when the hoisting of the Austrian colours on their walls too plainly avowed that they were to be retained as permanent acquisitions by the Emperor. This was soon placed beyond a doubt by the proclamation issued by Prince Cobourg on 13th July 1793, on entering the town, in which he declared, "I announce, by the present proclamation, that I take possession in name of his *Imperial and Royal Majesty*, and that I will accord to all the inhabitants of the *conquered* countries security and protection, hereby declaring that I will only exercise the power conferred upon me by the *Right of Conquest* for the preservation of the public peace, and the protection of individuals." This was immediately followed by the establishment of an Imperial and Royal Junta at Condé, for the administration of the conquered provinces, in the name of the Emperor, which commenced its operations by dispossessing all the revolutionary authorities, restoring the religious bodies, checking the circulation of assignats, and removing the sequestration from the emigrant estates.²

² Hard. ii.
327, 328.

The public revelation of this unhappy change in the objects of the coalition was the first rude shock which its fortunes received. It sowed divisions among the Allies, as much as it united its enemies. Prussia now perceived clearly that the war had become one of aggression on the part of Austria ; and, conceiving the utmost disquietude at such an augmentation of the power of her dreaded rival, secretly resolved to paralyse all the operations of her armies. Now that Mayence, the bulwark of the north of Germany, was regained, the cabinet of Berlin resolved to withdraw, as soon as decency would permit, from a contest in which success appeared more to be dreaded than defeat. The French emigrants were struck with consternation at so decisive a proof of the intended spoliation of their country ; Monsieur, afterwards Louis XVIII., solemnly protested, as guardian for his nephew, Louis XVII., against any dismemberment of his dominions ; placards, to which it was suspected, not without reason, Dumourier was no stranger, appeared on all the walls of Brussels, calling on all Frenchmen to unite, to save their country from the fate of Poland ; while the Convention, turning to the best account this announcement of intended conquest, succeeded in inspiring a degree of unanimity in defence of their country, which they never could have effected had the Allies confined themselves to the original objects of the war.¹

CHAP.
XIII.1793.
43.Disastrous
effects of
this step.¹ Hard. ii.
329, 331.

Custine, removed from the army of the Rhine, was placed in command of the army of Flanders in the end of May. On his arrival at the camp of Cæsar, he found the soldiers in the most deplorable state, both of disorganisation and military spirit ; a large portion of the older troops had been withdrawn to sustain the war in La Vendée, and their places supplied by young conscripts, almost totally undisciplined, who were shaken by the first appearance of the enemy's squadrons. "He trembled," to use his own words, "at the thought of what might occur, if he followed the example of his predecessors, and

44.

Custine
takes shelter
in intrench-
ed camps.

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.

July 23.

¹ Jom. iii.
182, 184,
185. Hard.
ii. 343.
Toul. iv.
44, 45.

45.
Rout in the
camp of
Cæsar, and
desperate
condition of
the French.

made a forward movement before confidence and discipline were re-established among the soldiers." His first care was to issue a severe proclamation, calculated to restore discipline; his next, to use the utmost efforts to revive the spirit of the troops; but as he was still inferior in number to his opponents, he did not venture, notwithstanding the reiterated orders of the Convention, to make any movement for the relief of the besieged places. Incessantly engaged in teaching the conscripts the rudiments of the military art, he chose to brave the resentment of government rather than lead them to certain butchery, and probable defeat. His firmness in discharging this important but perilous duty proved fatal to himself, but the salvation of France. It habituated an undisciplined crowd to the use of arms, and preserved, in a period of extreme peril, the nucleus of a regular force, on which the preservation of the Republic depended. But the Convention, impatient for more splendid achievements, and prompt to ascribe every disaster to the fault of the generals, deprived him of the command, and ordered him to Paris, to answer for his conduct. There he was soon after delivered over to the Revolutionary Tribunal, condemned, and executed, along with Beauharnais, accused of misconduct in the attempt to raise the siege of Mayence, whose name the extraordinary fortunes of his widow have rescued from oblivion. Cruel and unjust examples, which added to the numerous sins of the Republican government; but which, by placing its generals in the alternative of victory or death, contributed to augment the fearless energy which led to the subsequent triumphs of the French arms.¹

Reinforced by the besieging armies, the forces under Prince Cobourg now amounted to above eighty thousand foot and twenty thousand horse, all ready for action; a force greatly superior to the dispirited and inexperienced troops to which it was opposed. Shut up within the camp of Cæsar, the French army was avowedly unable to keep the field in presence of the Allies. Even this last

stronghold they were not long permitted to retain. In the beginning of August, they were attacked and driven from its trenches with so much ease, that the rout could hardly be called a battle. The Republicans fled in confusion the moment the Allies appeared in sight. So precipitate was their flight, that, as at the battle of the Spurs, three centuries before, hardly a shot was fired or a stroke given, before the whole army was dissolved. After this disaster, the Republicans retreated behind the Scarpe, the last defensible ground in front of Arras; beyond which there remained neither position to take, nor fortified place to defend, on the road to Paris. The Allies in great force were grouped within one hundred and sixty miles of that capital; fifteen days' march would have brought them to its gates. Already Cambray was invested; Cateau Cambresis occupied; a camp formed between Péronne and St Quentin, and the light troops pushed on to Péronne and Bapaume. Irresolution prevailed in the French army, dismay in the capital, everywhere the Republican authorities were taking to flight. The Austrian generals, encouraged by such extraordinary successes, were at length urgent to advance and improve them, before the enemy recovered from their consternation; and if they had been permitted to do so, what incalculable disasters might Europe have been spared! We shall see hereafter the deplorable division of interests which prevented this early termination of the war; and how deeply Great Britain has cause to regret the narrow and selfish views which prompted the part she took in the transaction.¹

CHAP.
XIII.1793.
August 8.¹ Hard. ii.
348, 349.
Toul. iv.
45-49. Ann.
Reg. 1793,
191.

But how desperate soever the fortunes of the Republic now appeared, and in reality were, had the Allies acted with vigour and unanimity, no weakness or faltering appeared in the conduct of the French government. When the invasion had, on every side, pierced the territory of France, and civil war tore its bosom, its rulers took the most energetic steps to meet the danger. The Con-

46.
Vigorous
measures of
the govern-
ment.

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.

vention had armed the Committee of Public Salvation with a power more absolute than ever had been wielded by an eastern conqueror ; and the decrees of the legislature corresponded to the energy of their measures. They felt, in the language of Danton, "The coalesced kings of Europe are leagued against us : we hurl at them, for gage of battle, the head of a king ;" and that life or death was in the struggle. The whole power of France was called forth ; ten thousand committees, spread over every part of the country, carried into execution the despotic mandates of the Committee of Public Salvation, and its resistless powers wrung not less out of the sufferings than the patriotism of the country the means of successful resistance. It was well for France that it was so ; for no situation could be more perilous than that in which the Revolutionary government was now placed. No less than two hundred and eighty thousand men were in the field on the side of the Allies, from Bâle to Dunkirk ; the ancient barrier of France was broken through by the capture of Valenciennes and Condé ; Mayence gave the invaders a secure passage into the heart of the country ; while Toulon and Lyons had raised the standard of revolt, and a devouring fire consumed the western provinces. Sixty thousand insurgents in La Vendée threatened Paris in the rear, while one hundred and eighty thousand Allies in front seemed prepared to encamp under its walls. The forces of the Republic were not only inferior in number, but their spirit, discipline, and equipment were in the most wretched state.¹

¹ Jom. iv.
21, 24, 25.
Th. v. 170,
207. Mig.
i. 248.

47.
Their efforts
to rouse the
whole popu-
lation.

Aug. 3.

But all these deficiencies in numbers and organisation were speedily supplied, by the extraordinary energy and ability which rose to the head of military affairs after the insurrection of 31st May, and the establishment of the Committee of Public Salvation. Barère, on the part of that able body, declared in the Assembly, "Liberty has become the creditor of every citizen ; some owe it their industry ; others their fortune ; some their counsels ;

others their arms ; all their lives. Every native of France, of whatever age or sex, is called to the defence of his country. All moral and physical powers,—all political and industrial resources, are at its command. Let every one, then, occupy his post in the grand national and military movement which is in preparation. The young men must march to the frontiers ; the more advanced forge the arms, transport the baggage and artillery, or provide the subsistence requisite for their defence. The women will make the tents, the dresses of the soldiers, and carry their beneficent labours into the interior of the hospitals ; even the hands of infancy may be usefully employed ; and the aged, imitating the example of ancient virtue, will cause themselves to be transported into the public places, to animate the youth by their exhortations and their example. Let the national edifices be converted into barracks, the public squares into workshops, the cellars into manufactories of saltpetre ; let the saddle-horses be furnished for the cavalry, the draught-horses for the artillery ; the fowling-pieces, the swords, and pikes, will suffice for the service of the interior. The Republic is a besieged city ; all its territory must become a vast camp.”¹

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxviii. 467,
470. Th. v.
207. Mig.
ii. 286.

These energetic measures were not only adopted by the Assembly, but immediately carried into execution. A new levy of twelve hundred thousand men was ordered by the Convention ; and, what is still more extraordinary, the greater part of this immense body was soon under arms. France became an immense workshop, resounding with the note of military preparation ; the roads were covered with conscripts hastening to the different points of assembly ; fourteen armies, numbering twelve hundred thousand soldiers, were soon assembled round the standards of the Republic. The whole property of the state, by means of confiscations, and the forced circulation of assignats, was put at the disposal of the government ; the insurgent population everywhere threw the better classes

48.
Great levy
of 1,200,000
men order-
ed, and exe-
cuted.
Aug. 3.

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.

into captivity, while bands of revolutionary ruffians, paid by the state, perambulated every village in its territory, and wrung from the terrified inhabitants unqualified submission to the despotic Republic. At the same time, the means of raising supplies were provided with equal energy. All the old claims on the state were converted into a great revolutionary debt, in which the new could not be distinguished from the ancient creditors. A forced tax of a milliard, or £40,000,000 sterling, was ordered to be instantly levied from the rich, which was realised in paper, secured at once on the national domains. As the prices of every article, even those of the first necessity, were altogether deranged by these measures, and the prospect of famine was everywhere immediate, the municipalities throughout France were invested with the power of seizing subsistence and merchandise of every kind in the hands of the owners, and compelling their sale for a fixed price in assignats; in other words, taking them for an elusory payment. The great object of all these measures was at once to repel the foreign invasion, and render the national domains an immediate source of income, at a time when purchasers could not be found; and it must be confessed, that never did a government adopt such vast and energetic measures to attain these objects. Fear became the great engine for filling the ranks: the bayonets of the Allies appeared less formidable than the guillotine of the Convention; and safety, despaired of everywhere else, was found alone in the armies on the frontier. The destruction of property, the ruin of industry, the agonies of millions, appeared as nothing to men who wielded the engines of the Revolution; fortune or wealth have no weight with those who are engaged in a struggle of life and death.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xviii. 470,
479. Jom.
iv. 21, 22.
Hard. ii.
278, 279.
Th. v. 207,
208.

By a strange combination of circumstances, the ruin of commercial credit, the loss of the colonies, the stagnation of industry, the drying up of the sources of opulence, augmented the present resources of the revolutionary

government. Ruling an impoverished and bankrupt state, the Convention was for the time the richest power in Europe. Despotism, it is true, extinguishes the sources of future wealth, but it gives a command of present resources which no regular government can obtain. The immense debts of government were paid in paper money, issued at no expense, and bearing a forced circulation; the numerous confiscations gave a shadow of security to its engagements; the terrible right of requisition put every remnant of private wealth at its disposal; the conscription filled the army with all the youth of the state. Terror and famine impelled multitudes voluntarily into its ranks. Before them was the garden of hope—behind them a howling wilderness.

At the head of the military department was placed Carnot,* a man whose extraordinary talents and resolute

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.

49.

Effect of
general
suffering in
filling the
army.

* Lazare Nicolas Marguerite Carnot was born at Nolay in Burgundy, on 13th May 1753, of a respectable and highly esteemed burgher family. His father was an advocate; and as he had eighteen children, and no fortune, he esteemed himself fortunate in getting an entrance for Lazare to the college of Autun, with a view to his entering the ecclesiastical profession. No sooner, however, had young Carnot commenced his studies, than he showed so decided a predilection for mathematical and mechanical pursuits, that his father, wisely yielding to an impulse which he could not control, removed him from his ecclesiastical labours, and sent him to one of the military schools of the capital. There, at the expiration of two years, he went through a brilliant examination, and was admitted to the corps of engineers, the only branch of the service which was then open to young men who had not the advantage of aristocratic birth. From thence he was removed to the military school of Mézières, where he studied for two years under the celebrated Professor Monge. His first employment in active life was in the year 1773, when he was engaged in aiding in the superintendence of considerable additions to the fortifications of Calais. After this occupation ceased, as the continuance of peace left him much leisure time upon his hands, he applied himself to the study of literature and poetry; and the "Almanach des Muses," for some years after, contains several poetical pieces of his composition. In 1783, he was the successful competitor for a prize offered by the Academy of Dijon, for an Eloge on Vauban; and on this occasion he was publicly crowned by the Prince of Condé, who happened to be there at the time, and who took him in so effectual a manner under his protection, that at the age of thirty-two he was captain of engineers and chevalier of the order of St Louis. Though highly estimating the genius of Vauban, however, Carnot was not a mere follower of his principles, and constantly maintained in private, as he did at a subsequent period in his writings on the subject, that the well-known assertion of that great man, that the means of defence in sieges were inferior to those of attack, and that the hour of the fall of every fortress might be calculated with mathematical

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50.Carnot, war
minister.
His charac-
ter.

character contributed more than any other circumstance to the early success of the revolutionary wars. Austere in character, unbending in disposition, republican in principle, he more nearly resembled the stern patriots of antiquity than any other statesman in modern times. It was his misfortune to be associated with Robespierre in the Committee of Public Salvation, during the whole of the Reign of Terror, and his name, in consequence, stands affixed to many of the worst acts of that sanguinary tyrant ; but he has solemnly asserted, and his character entitles the allegation to attention, that in the pressure of business he signed these documents without knowing what they contained, or at all events on the responsibility of

certainly, was erroneous. Invincible tenacity of his opinions, and great vigour in their conception, were, in every period of life, his leading characteristics.

During the peace which followed the conclusion of the American War, he followed out with ardour his mechanical researches, and in 1786 published an essay on machines, which so much added to his reputation, that he was offered by Prince Henry of Prussia, who had witnessed his crowning at Dijon, advancement in the Prussian service, which he had patriotic spirit enough to decline. He had too much penetration not to see that the time was rapidly approaching when the barriers of rank would be thrown down in his own country, and the career of talent be open to all. Soon after, he married the daughter of a rich merchant at St Omer, and this procured for him an entrance into the Legislative Assembly, as deputy for the department of the Pas de Calais, in 1791.

An ardent admirer of the institutions of antiquity, enamoured of the heroes of Plutarch, living much with the mighty dead, hardly at all with the living little, he dreamt of the Sabine farm and the virtues of Fabricius amidst the corruptions of Paris, and soon gave decisive proof that he was resolved to follow out his principles in the government and regeneration of France. His first step in the Assembly was a motion for a decree against Calonne, the Viscount Mirabeau, and the German princes, who were preparing, under the Prince of Condé, to make war upon France—a circumstance which not unnaturally led to the remark, that the first use he had made of power was to assail the benefactor whose crowning of him at Dijon had first opened to him the path of distinction. His subsequent career demonstrated at once the violence, austerity, and rigidity of his principles. He was soon made a member of the military committee in the Assembly, the chief object of which was to censure and depreciate the war measures of government—a duty which he executed with equal zeal and ability. Soon after, he brought forward a motion for destroying all citadels of fortified towns, upon the ground that it gave government the means of bombarding the streets, and overawing the inhabitants. He declaimed afterwards, with force and eloquence, against the murderers of General Dillon, who had fallen the victim of a military mutiny ; but he warmly supported the disbanding of the constitutional guard of Louis XVI., which necessarily led to the surrender of that monarch to civil assassins. Subsequently he strongly enforced, on the 10th August, the decree for the dethronement of Louis, and

his colleagues, to whom the interior department more immediately belonged; that such was the pressure on him that he would have signed a warrant for his own execution; and that he saved more lives by his entreaties, than his colleagues destroyed by their severity. Still, giving full weight to this defence, and admitting that a patriot contending for the independence of his country against foreign enemies, and a minister jointly intrusted with others with the duties of government, is often obliged to concur in many measures of which he individually disapproves¹—still, when we advert to the dreadful career of the Committee of Public Salvation, of which he was an active member, it is impossible to consider this apology

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¹ Carnot's
Memoirs,
230.

took such a lead on that occasion, that he was appointed a member of the committee which, on the overthrow of the crown, assumed the supreme direction of affairs.

The duty assigned to Carnot on that occasion was to organise and reduce to obedience the army of the Rhine; and, by the vigour and severity of his proceedings, he brought that important body to range itself under the banners of the revolutionary government at Paris. Next he set off to the Pyrenees, and accomplished the same result with the troops there, as well as put them in a situation to open the campaign against the Spanish forces. In the Convention, he was again elected deputy for the Pas de Calais. In the trial of Louis he voted for his death, observing—"In my opinion, justice and policy demand his death, but never did duty so weigh upon my heart." Subsequently he prepared several reports, which were eagerly adopted by the legislature, on the necessity of incorporating Flanders and other conquests with the Republic, and was one of the first who, disregarding the declarations against foreign conquest so often made by the Constituent Assembly, openly declared that nature had assigned the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, as the natural limits of the French territory, and that no peace should be concluded which did not secure them to the Great Nation. His appointment as a member of the Committee of Public Salvation in August 1793, gave him too fair an opportunity of putting his principles into practice; and thenceforward his biography forms part of the history of France.

Carnot published several able works on scientific subjects; but his literary reputation rests chiefly on his celebrated theory for the defence of strong places, in which, in opposition to Vauban, he strenuously maintains that the means of defence in fortified towns may be made equal or superior to those of attack, so that they could never be taken. His plan for attaining this object rests on three bases:—1st, That the duty of defending the stronghold to the *last extremity* should, by military law, be held to attach to the governor and whole garrison. 2d, That the scarps and counterscarps should not, as heretofore, be perpendicular, or nearly so, and built of masonry, but of turf, inclined, that of the scarp at an angle of 45 degrees, that of the counterscarp at a much greater one, so as to admit of sorties being made over it from any part of the ditch, and that the wall on which reliance was to be placed should be built at the

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1793.

51.
His charac-
ter as a
statesman.

as altogether satisfactory; and most certainly Carnot's memory will never be rescued from the bloody stain which remains affixed to all the members of that relentless government.

He was the creator of the new military art in France, which Dumourier was only permitted to sketch, and Napoleon brought to perfection. Simple in his manners, unostentatious in his habits, incorruptible in his inclinations, though stern and relentless in his principles, he was alike superior to the love of wealth, the weakness of inferior, and the voice of ambition, the infirmity of noble minds. When called to the post of danger by the voice of his country, he never declined the peril: disdaining

bottom of the ditch, and in its middle, which was to be dry, and loopholed for musketry. 3d, That a large number of howitzers and thirteen-inch mortars in casements, charged with four-ounce balls, should be constantly in readiness to open a concentric fire upon any enemy who should attempt to run the sap up to the top of the counterscarp, thus making a vertical fire the basis rather than an accessory to the defence. And he demonstrated, by the calculation of chances, that such a number of these would take effect as to prove fatal to any attacking force, and the larger the more certainly. There was, unquestionably, great originality and merit in these conceptions; but Sir Howard Douglas, to whose genius and science British gunnery owes so much, has proved, both on theoretical principles and from actual experiments—1st, That ricochet shot, levelled over the summit of the counterscarp, will, by the rebound, in three or four hours beat down the strongest wall of that description which can be constructed in the bottom of the ditch. 2d, That the wall, when so battered, will first nod, and at last fall *outwards*, so as to uncover the defending force, and afford rough solid footing for the assailants to rush over. 3d, That though the balls thrown into the air, at an angle of 45 degrees, will *ascend* with great velocity, yet, from the effect of the *resistance of the air*, they will descend with little more momentum than that resulting from their own weight, and could not be relied on as adequate to destroy or retard an enterprising enemy. Still there can be no doubt that Carnot's was a much greater step in the science of defence than had been made since the days of Vauban, and possibly may one day make the means of resistance equal to those of attack. In particular, it deserves consideration, whether, by making the balls heavier, as six or eight ounces, they might not be rendered as destructive to the besiegers as Carnot supposes. It is said that, in an experiment lately made in India with balls of eight ounces, it was fully demonstrated that this is the case. It is not a little remarkable that Carnot's scientific calculations, perfectly accurate if there was no atmosphere, proved erroneous from not taking into account the *resistance of the air*; just as his political speculations proved so destructive from not taking into account the resistance or impulse of human wickedness.—See *Mémoires sur CARNOT*, i. 124; *Biographie Universelle, Supplément*, ix. 181, 183; CARNOT, *Sur la Defense des Places Fortifiées*, Paris, 1812; SIR HOWARD DOUGLAS'S *Reply*, London, 1815; and JONES'S *Sieges*, ii. 164, 167.

to court Napoleon in the plenitude of his power, and alone voting against his assumption of the Imperial crown, he fled to his assistance in the hour of distress, and tendered the aid to a falling, which he had refused to a conquering monarch. Intrusted with the dictatorship of the armies, he justified his country's choice by victory ; superior even to the triumphs he had won, he resigned with pleasure the possession of power, to exercise his understanding in the abstract sciences, or renovate his heart by the impressions of country life. Almost alone of the illustrious men of his age, his character—if his fatal connexion with the Committee of Public Salvation could be forgotten—has emerged comparatively untainted from the revolutionary ordeal ; and history has to record, with the pride due to real greatness, that, after having wielded irresistible force, and withstood unfettered power, he died poor and unbefriended in a foreign land.¹

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¹ Thib. i. 37.
Carnot, 255.
Dum. iv. 5,
6.

“Carnot,” said Napoleon, “has organised victory.”

It was the maxim of this great man, “That nothing was so easy as to find excellent officers in all ranks, if they were only chosen according to their capacity and their courage. For this reason, he took the utmost pains to make himself acquainted with their names and character ; and such was the extent of his information, that it was rare for a soldier of merit to escape him, even though only a simple private. He deemed it impossible that an army, commanded by officers chosen exclusively from a limited class of society, could long maintain a contest with one led by those chosen with discernment from the inferior ranks. Such commanders as Turenne and Condé seemed too rare to be calculated upon with any degree of certainty from a privileged class ; while the mine of talent which lay hid in the lower stages of society presented inexhaustible resources.”² This principle, being founded on the eternal

52.
Carnot's
principles
for conduct-
ing the war.

² Carnot,
31, 32.

laws of nature, is of universal application. It gives rise to the great superiority of republican over monarchical forces ; and when once armies have been organised, and

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thoroughly disciplined on this footing, they never can be successfully resisted but by troops in whom the same military resources have been developed, and popular passions equally general called forth. Supposing the abilities of the higher orders to be equal to those of an equal number in the inferior, it is impossible that they can ever produce as great a mass of talent as will emerge on a free competition from the numerous ranks of their humble competitors. A hundred thousand men can never produce as many energetic characters as ten millions.

53.

Aided by
the effects of
the Revolution.

But this system, powerful as it is in developing talent, would have failed in enabling France to combat the forces of the coalition, had it not been for the extraordinary combination of causes which at this period brought the whole forces, physical and intellectual, of France into the ranks of the army. The Revolution had at once closed all other careers, and opened unbounded prospects to talent in that path, to all ranks indiscriminately ; and as it afforded the means of elevation in a peculiar manner to the most energetic and audacious characters, that dreadful convulsion was eminently favourable to the growth of military prowess. The distress consequent on the ruin of so many branches of industry, the agitation arising from the dissolution of all the bonds of society, the restless habits acquired by successful revolt, all conspired to spread a taste for military exploit, and fill the ranks of the army with needy but ardent adventurers. Such dispositions are always prevalent during civil dissensions, because it is the nature of such conflicts to awaken the vehement passions, and disqualify for the habits of ordinary life. But they were in an especial manner excited by the campaign of 1793, first by the call which resounded through France to defend the state, and next by the thirst for military glory which was aroused by the defeat of the invasion.

Feb. 6.

It was in the extraordinary energy and ability of the

Committee of Public Salvation,* joined to the ferment excited by the total subversion of society, the despotic power wielded by the Convention, and the extraordinary want of capacity in the allied cabinets and generals, that the real secret is to be found of the successful resistance by France to the formidable invasion of 1793. The inability of Napoleon to resist a similar attack in 1815 demonstrates this important truth, and should be a warning to future ages not to incur the same risk, in the hope of obtaining a similar triumph. Superior in military talent, heading a band of veterans, supported by a terrible name, he sought in vain to communicate to the empire the energy which, under the iron grasp of the Convention, had been brought into action in the Republic. A rational being will never succeed in equalling the strength which, in a transport of frenzy, a madman can for a brief period exert.¹

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54.

And the
ability of
the Com-
mittee of
Public Sal-
vation.¹ Jom. iii.
6. Hard.
ii. 278.

While such extraordinary and unheard-of efforts were making in France to resist the invasion with which they were menaced, a change, fraught in its ultimate results with important consequences, took place in the Imperial government. Kaunitz, so long at the head of the Austrian cabinet, had survived the age to which he belonged; his cautious habits, long experience, and great abilities, were inadequate to supply the want of that practical acquaintance with affairs which arises from having grown up under their influence. The French Revolution had opened up a new era in human affairs: the old actors, how distinguished soever, were unacquainted with the novel machinery, and unfit to play their parts in the mighty drama which was approaching. The veteran Austrian diplomatist retired from the helm, full of years and loaded with honours, from a prudent disinclination to risk his great reputation in the stormy scenes which had already arisen, and the still more difficult ones which his sagacity foresaw.² He

55.

Retirement
of Kaunitz
at Vienna,
and acces-
sion of Thu-
gut to the
direction
of foreign
affairs.² Hard. ii.
259, 260.

* Their names were at first Barère, Delmas, Bréard, Cambon, Debry, Danton, Guyton Morveau, Treilhard, and Lacroix.—See HARD. ii. 772.

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March 28.

was succeeded in the direction of foreign affairs by THUGUT,* who long kept possession of the situation of prime minister during the revolutionary war. The son of a poor boatman at Lintz, he had, by the industry of his parents, been early placed at the school of Oriental languages at Vienna, where his diligence and abilities attracted the notice of the Empress Maria Theresa. She recommended him to the director of the college, and at the age of fifteen he was attached, by her desire, as interpreter to the Austrian embassy at Constantinople, from whence he gradually rose in the diplomatic line to the portfolio of foreign affairs.

56.
His character and first measures.

Though he had long resided at Paris, and was intimately connected with Mirabeau, whose conversion to the interests of the court was partly owing to his exertions, he maintained throughout his career an inflexible hostility to Republican principles. His combinations were not always crowned with success—often they terminated in disaster; yet his bitterest enemies cannot deny him the credit of a truly patriotic spirit, an energetic character, profound skill in diplomacy, and a fidelity to his engagements, as unusual as it was honourable in those days of

* Thugut's history was very remarkable, and affords a striking instance of the manner in which, in seeking for the diplomatic or military ability of which they stand in need to sustain the fortunes of the state, even the most aristocratic governments on the Continent descend to the very humblest ranks of society. He was born at Lintz in 1739, and was the son of a poor boatman at that place, who, by great exertions, had succeeded in getting him placed at the Oriental School of Vienna, where the ability with which he underwent an examination in the Eastern languages attracted the notice of Maria Theresa, who was present on the occasion, and who directed that, on leaving the academy, he should be attached to the Austrian embassy at Constantinople. In 1754 he commenced his career at the Turkish capital in that capacity at the early age of fifteen; and such was the extraordinary progress he made in Eastern languages, that in three years he was appointed interpreter to the embassy. He continued in that important situation till 1770, and in 1772 was sent as envoy to the Congress of Torkchany, where he executed the delicate duties intrusted to him with such ability, that in 1774 he was made by Maria Theresa a baron, with the dignity of Commander of the Order of St Stephen. In 1774 he performed, by order of the Empress, several journeys in the suite of her daughters, the future Queens of France and Naples. In 1778, when the death of the Elector of Bavaria had rekindled the flames of war between Prussia and Austria, he was sent on a secret mission to endeavour to accom-

weakness and tergiversation. His accession to office was soon followed by an evident increase of vigour in diplomatic measures. Pressing notes to the inferior German powers brought about the equipment of that tardy and inefficient force, the Germanic contingents; while a menacing proclamation from the Diet of Ratisbon prohibited all circulation of French assignats or revolutionary writings, and ordered the immediate departure from their territory of all subjects of that country who could not give a sufficient reason for their residence. But though these measures might be well calculated to prevent the inundation of the empire with democratic principles, it was with very different weapons that the formidable army which had grown up out of the agonies of the Republic required to be combated.¹

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1793.
March 22.

¹Biog. Univ.
lxv. 573.
Hard.ii.259,
260, 274.

At the time, however, that the zeal of Austria was thus warming in the common cause, that of Prussia was rapidly cooling; and to the lukewarmness and indifference of that power in the contest with France, more than to any other cause, the extraordinary success which for some years attended the Republican arms is to be ascribed. The selfish ambition of the cabinets of Vienna, St Peters-

57.
Incipient
divisions
between
Prussia and
Austria.

modate matters with the Great Frederick, who at once divined his astute character. Subsequently he was sent, in 1780, as minister of Austria, to the court of Warsaw; and in 1788, when Moldavia and Wallachia were conquered by the united arms of Russia and Austria, he was intrusted jointly by the two powers with the government of those provinces; which important situation he held till the peace of Teschen in 1790. After this he went to Paris, ostensibly to enjoy his fortune, but really as joint ambassador in secret with Count de Mery, who held that situation, and who was desirous of his aid to observe the progress and mitigate the disasters of the Revolution. He there had several interviews with Mirabeau, and powerfully contributed to fix that redoubtable orator in the interests of the court, and the prosecution of those designs in which he was unhappily interrupted by his death. In 1792, the advanced age and increasing infirmities of Kaunitz caused him to be recalled to Vienna, where he soon came to acquire a preponderating influence; and, though the former still held the situation of chancellor of state, or prime minister, yet Thugut really had the entire direction of affairs; and on his death, in June 1794, he was appointed in his stead, and entirely directed the Imperial diplomacy till June 1801, when Napoleon, after the battle of Marengo, made his retirement a *sine quâ non* of any accommodation—deeming any peace insecure as long as so decided an opponent of the Revolution directed the Austrian councils.—See *Biographie Universelle*, xlv. 573, 576 (THUGUT).

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1793.

burg, and Berlin, was the cause of this unhappy disunion. Hardly was the ink of the treaty of the 14th July with Great Britain dry, when the hoisting of the Austrian flag on the walls of Valenciennes and Condé opened the eyes of the Prussian ministry to the projects of aggrandisement which were entertained by the Imperial cabinet, and which Thugut supported with his whole talents and influence. Irritated and chagrined at this prospect of material accession of power to their dreaded rival, the cabinet of Berlin derived some consolation from the completion of their arrangements with the Empress Catherine for the partition of Poland, in virtue of which the Prussian force had recently taken possession of Dantzic, with its noble harbour and fortifications, besides Thorn, and a large circumjacent territory, to the no small annoyance of Austria, which saw itself excluded from all share in the projected spoliation. Nor was Russia likely to be a more disinterested combatant in the common cause: for she, too, was intent on the work of partition, and had already inundated the duchy of Warsaw with troops, with the fixed design of rendering it the frontier of the Muscovite dominions. Thus, at the moment when the evident approach of peril to the national independence was closing those frightful divisions which had hitherto paralysed the strength of France, the allied powers, intent on separate projects of aggrandisement, were rapidly relaxing the bonds of the confederacy, and engaging in the most iniquitous partition recorded in modern times, at the very time when that vast power was arising, which was so soon destined to make them all tremble for their own possessions.¹

¹ Hard. ii.
332, 333.

58.

Recognition
of the mari-
time law by
the Allies.

This stage of the contest was marked by an important step in the maritime relations of Europe, which afterwards became of the utmost moment in the important discussions on neutral rights which took place at the close of the century. The Empress Catherine publicly announced the departure of Russia from the principles of the Armed

Neutrality, and her resolution to act on those usages which Great Britain had uniformly maintained to be in conformity with the practice of all belligerent states, forming the common naval code of Europe. She equipped a fleet of twenty-five ships of the line, which was destined to cruise in the Baltic and North Seas, and whose instructions were “to seize all vessels, without distinction, navigating under the flag of the French Republic, or that of any other state which they might assume; and also to *arrest every neutral vessel* destined and loaded for a French harbour—oblige them to retrace their steps, or make for the nearest neutral harbour which might suit their convenience.” These instructions were publicly announced to the Prussian, Swedish, and Danish courts;* and although the cabinet of Copenhagen, which early perceived the advantages of the lucrative neutral commerce which the general hostility was likely to throw into the hands of its subjects, at first made some difficulties, yet it yielded at length, and all the maritime powers agreed to revert to the usages of war in regard to the neutrals, which had existed prior to the Armed Neutrality in 1780.¹

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1793.

¹ Hard. ii.
334, 341.

By a declaration issued on June 8, the British government enjoined its naval commanders to search all neutral vessels bound for France for articles contraband of war; and Sweden, Denmark, and Prussia, successively adopted the same principles. The latter power, in particular, declared, in a note to Count Bernstorff, intended to obviate the objections of the cabinet of Denmark, “His Majesty the King of Prussia, who has no interest but what is com-

59.
Adoption of
the same
principles
by Britain,
Prussia, and
Denmark.

* M. Bernstorff declared to the Danish cabinet, after announcing these instructions: Her Imperial Majesty, in issuing such orders, cannot be supposed to have in the slightest degree deviated from the beneficent system which is calculated to secure the interest of neutrals in war, seeing that it is noways applicable to the present circumstances. The French Revolutionists, after having overturned everything in their own country, and bathed their impious hands in the blood of their sovereign, have, by a public decree, declared themselves the allies of every people who shall commit similar atrocities, and have followed this up by attacking with an armed force all their neighbours. Neutrality cannot exist with such a power, except in so far as it may be assumed from prudential considerations. Should there be any states whose situation

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mon with the King of Great Britain, can make no objection to the principles which circumstances have caused the court of London to adopt relative to the commerce of neutrals during the present war with France. The undersigned, in acceding absolutely and without limitation to all the demands of the British ambassador, obeys the express injunctions of his court in the most solemn manner, in order to prove to the world the perfect concert which in that, as in all other respects, prevails between the King of Prussia and the King of Great Britain." Thus, how loudly soever the maritime powers may have demanded a new maritime code as a restraint on the hostility of others when they were neutral, they were willing enough to revert to the old usages when they in their turn became the belligerent parties.¹

¹ Hard. ii.
334, 341.

60.
Absurd
policy of
the Allies,
and ruinous
division of
the army
insisted on
by the Bri-
tish.

If the conduct of the Allies had been purposely intended to develop the formidable military strength which had grown up in the French Republic, they could not have adopted measures better calculated to effect their object than were actually pursued. Four months of success, which might have been rendered decisive, had been followed by the most blameable inactivity. After having broken the frontier line of fortresses, and defeated the covering army of France in a pitched battle, when within fifteen marches of Paris, and at the head of a splendid army of a hundred and thirty thousand effective men, after fully providing for their communications, they thought fit to separate their forces, and, instead of pushing on to the centre of the Republican power, pursue independent plans of aggrandisement.² The British, with their allies, amounting to

² Jom. iv.
35. Hard.
ii. 401. Th.
v. 218, 219.
Aug. 11.

does not permit them to make such efficacious efforts as the greater powers in the common cause, the least that can be required of them is, that they shall make use of such means as are evidently at their disposal, by abstaining from all intercourse with these disturbers of the public peace. Her Imperial Majesty feels herself the more entitled to exact these sacrifices, as she has cheerfully submitted to them herself; being well aware of the disastrous effects which would ensue to the common interest, if, by reason of a free transport of provisions and naval stores, the enemy were put in possession of the means of nourishing and prolonging the contest.—See *Ann. Reg.* xxxiii.; *State Papers*, No. 41; and HARD. ii. 337, 341.

above thirty-five thousand men, moved towards Dunkirk, so long the object of their maritime jealousy, while forty-five thousand of the Imperialists sat down before Quesnoy, and the remainder of their vast army was broken into detachments to preserve the communications.

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From this ruinous division may be dated all the subsequent disasters of the campaign. Had they held together, and pushed on vigorously against the masses of the enemy's forces, now severely weakened and depressed by defeat, there cannot be a doubt that the object of the war would have been gained. The decrees for levying the population *en masse* were not passed by the Convention for some weeks afterwards, and the forces they produced were not organised for three months. The mighty genius of Carnot had not as yet assumed the helm of affairs; the Committee of Public Salvation had not hitherto acquired its terrible energy; everything promised great results to vigorous and simultaneous operations. It was a resolution of the British cabinet, in opposition to the declared and earnest wish of Cobourg and all the allied generals, which occasioned this fatal division. The impartial historian must confess with a sigh, that it was British interests which here interfered with the great objects of the war, and that, by compelling her contingent to separate for the siege of Dunkirk, Great Britain largely contributed to postpone, for a very long period, its glorious termination. Posterity has had ample room to lament the error: a war of twenty years deeply checkered with disaster, the addition of six hundred millions to the public debt, the sacrifice of millions of brave men, may be in a great degree traced to this unhappy resolution. For its adoption, on selfish grounds, Britain is still suffering a just punishment.¹

61.
The British besiege Dunkirk, the Austrians Quesnoy.

¹ Toul. iv. 49. Ann. Reg. 1793, 377. Jom. iv. 26, 37. Hard. ii. 346, 347, 350.

The Austrians were successful in their enterprise. After fifteen days of open trenches, Quesnoy capitulated, and the garrison, consisting of four thousand men, were made prisoners of war. The efforts of the Republicans

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62.

Quesnoy
falls, but the
siege of
Dunkirk is
protracted.
Nov. 11.

to raise the siege terminated in nothing but disaster. Two columns of ten thousand men each, destined to disquiet the besiegers, were routed, and in one of them a square of three thousand men was broken, and totally destroyed by the Imperial cavalry. But a very different fate awaited the British besieging army. The corps under the command of the Duke of York, consisting of twenty thousand British and Hanoverians, was raised, by the junction of a body of Austrians under Alvinzi, to thirty-seven thousand men. This force was inadequate to the enterprise, exposed as it was to attack from the main body of the French army. On the 18th August the Duke of York arrived in the neighbourhood of Lincelles, where, after an obstinate engagement, a strong redoubt was carried by the English Guards, and twelve pieces of cannon were taken. At the same time the Dutch troops advanced under Marshal Freytag, and, driving the enemy from his position near Dunkirk, the Allies advanced to within a league of the place, and encamped at Furnes, stretching from that place to the sandhills on the sea-shore. The fortress was immediately summoned, but the governor returned a determined refusal.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
1793, 379,
380. Jom.
iv. 41, 45.

63.
Vigorous
efforts of
the French
for the relief
of the for-
tress, and
slow pro-
gress of the
British.

Sensible of the importance of this stronghold, which, if gained by the British, would have given them an easy inlet into the heart of France, the Republicans made the most vigorous efforts to raise the siege. "It is not," said Carnot, in a despatch to Houchard, "merely in a military point of view that Dunkirk is so important: it is far more so, because the national honour is involved in its relief. Pitt cannot prevent the revolution which is approaching in England, but by gaining that town to indemnify his country for the expenses of the war. Accumulate, therefore, immense forces in Flanders, and drive the enemy from its plains; the decisive point of the contest lies there." This was the more necessary, because the works of the place were in the most deplorable state when the

Allies appeared before it; and the garrison, consisting only of three thousand men, was totally insufficient to defend the town. If the bombarding flotilla had arrived from England at the same time with the besieging army, there can be no doubt that it must immediately have fallen. Immense preparations were making at Woolwich for the siege, and eleven new battalions had been embarked in the Thames for the besieging army. But such was the tardiness of their movements, that not a vessel appeared in sight at the harbour of Dunkirk, and the mistress of the seas had the mortification to find her land forces severely harassed by discharges from the contemptible gunboats of the enemy. The delays of the British in these operations proved what novices they were in the art of war, and how little they were aware of the importance of time in military movements. Above three weeks were employed in preparations by the besieging force—a delay which enabled the French to bring up from the distant frontier of the Moselle the forces which ultimately raised the siege, and decided the fate of the campaign.¹

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XIII.

1793.

¹ Th. v. 220.
Jom. iv. 46.
Ann. Reg.
1793, 380.
Hard. ii. 366.

The French rulers did not display the same inactivity. Following the wise course of accumulating overwhelming forces upon the decisive point, they brought thirty-five thousand men, by forced marches, and in great part by post, from the armies of the Rhine and Moselle, and placed the army destined to raise the siege, consisting by this addition of nearly fifty thousand men, under the command of General Houchard. The investment not having been completed, he succeeded in throwing ten thousand additional troops, on whose fidelity reliance could be placed, into the garrison. At the same time, the covering army, consisting of twenty thousand Dutch and Austrians, under the command of Marshal Freytag, was threatened by an attacking force of nearly double its amount. While the Republicans were thus adopting the system of concentrating their forces, the Allies, by

64.
They accumulate
forces there
from the
Rhine to the
Moselle.

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the expansion of theirs, gave it every possible chance of success. A hundred thousand men, dispersed round Quesnoy, and extending from the sea to the Moselle, guarded all the entrances into the Netherlands, and covered a line two hundred miles in length. Thus a hundred and twenty thousand men were charged at once with the covering of two sieges, the maintenance of that immense line, and the protection of all Flanders, from an enterprising enemy, possessing an interior line of communication, and already acting upon the principle of sacrificing all lesser objects to the weight to be given to the decisive blow.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
1793, 380.
Th. v. 220,
239. Journ.
iv. 51.

65.
Designs of
Carnot, and
operations
of Houchard.

The situation of the allied covering army was such as to give a vigorous attack, by an imposing mass of assailants, every chance of success. Freytag's corps of observation was, in the end, not posted at Furnes, so as to protect the rear of the besiegers, but a considerable way in front of it, in order to prevent any communication between the besieged and the interior of France; while the Dutch, under the Prince of Orange, were at the distance of three days' march at Menin, and incapable of rendering any assistance; and the Duke of York's besieging force lay exposed to an attack between these dispersed bodies. The Committee of Public Salvation had enjoined Houchard to throw himself, with forty thousand men, between the three corps, thus detached as if to invite his separate attacks, and fall successively on Freytag, the Prince of Orange, and the Duke of York. Napoleon would unquestionably have done so if he had been at the head of the army of Italy, and signalled Dunkirk, in all probability, by as decisive success as Rivoli or Arcola. But that audacious mode of proceeding could hardly be expected from a second in command; the principles on which it was founded were not yet understood, nor were his troops adequate to so bold an enterprise. He contented himself, therefore, with marching against the front of Freytag, with a view to throw

him back on the besieging force, and raise the siege, instead of interposing between them, and destroying both. The object to be thus attained was important, and its achievement proved the salvation of France. But it fell very far short of the great success expected by the French government ; and the failure of the Republican general to enter into the spirit of their orders at length brought him to the scaffold.¹

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XIII.

1793.

¹ Th. v. 239,
240. Hard.
ii. 370, 371.

The attack was commenced on Marshal Freytag in the beginning of September. A series of engagements took place, from the 5th to the 7th September, between the French and the covering army, which terminated unfavourably to the Allies ; and at length, on the morning of the 8th, a decisive attack was made by General Houchard on the main body of the Austrians, consisting of nearly eighteen thousand men, near Hondscote, in which the latter were defeated with the loss of fifteen hundred men. Meanwhile, the garrison of Dunkirk, acting in concert with the external army, made a vigorous sally on the besiegers, with forces superior to their own, and exposed them to the most imminent peril. The Duke of York, in consequence of the defeat of the covering force, justly deemed his situation too precarious to risk a further stay in the lines, and, on the night of the 8th, withdrew his besieging force, leaving fifty-two pieces of heavy artillery, and a large quantity of ammunition and baggage, to the conquerors. The consequences of this defeat proved ruinous to the whole campaign. It excited the most extravagant joy at Paris, and elevated the public spirit to a degree great in proportion to their former depression. The dislodging of a few thousand men at the extremity of the line changed the face of the war from the German Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. The Convention, relieved from the dread of immediate danger, and the peril of invasion, got time to mature its plans of foreign conquest,² and organise the immense military preparations

66.

The siege is raised, and ruinous consequence of this defeat on the whole campaign.
Sept. 5 to 7.
Sept. 8.² Jom. iv. 54,
61. Ann.
Reg. 1793,
p. 381. Th.
v. 242, 244.
Toul. iv. 53,
54.

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1793.

in the interior ; while Fortune, weary of a party which threw away the opportunities of receiving her favours, passed over to the other side.

67.

The Republicans do not follow up their success with vigour.

Houchard, however, did not improve his advantages as might have been expected. Instead of following up the plan of concentrating his forces upon a few points, he renewed the system of division, which had been so imprudently adopted by his adversaries. The forces of the Duke of York, in the camp to which he retired, being deemed too powerful for an immediate attack, he resolved to assail a corps of Dutch who were posted at Menin. A series of actions, with various success, in consequence ensued between the detached corps of the Allies, which kept up the communication between the Duke of York's army and the main body of the Imperialists under Prince Cobourg. On the one hand, the Dutch, overwhelmed by superior masses of the enemy, were defeated with the loss of two thousand men, and forty pieces of cannon ; while, on the other, General Beaulieu totally routed the army of Houchard at Courtray, and drove him behind the Lys. Nor did the disaster rest there. The panic communicated itself to all the camps, all the divisions ; and the army which had lately raised the siege of Dunkirk, sought shelter in a promiscuous crowd under the cannon of Lisle—a striking proof of the unfitness of the Republican levies as yet for field movements, and of the ease with which, by energetic operations in large masses at that period, the greatest successes might have been obtained by the numerous and disciplined armies of the Allies, if acting together or in concert, and led by an able commander.¹

Sept. 12.

Sept. 15.

¹ Jom. iv. 55, 65, 66. Ann. Reg. 1793, 388. Hard. ii. 369. Th. v. 246, 247. Toul. iv. 55.

68.

And Houchard is arrested and executed.

This last disaster proved fatal to General Houchard, already charged with culpable inactivity in not following up the advantages at Hondscote by an immediate attack upon the British force. Accused by his own officers, he was brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal at Paris, condemned and executed. The English had sacrificed Admiral Byng for having suffered a defeat ; the Romans

had condemned Manlius for having fought in disobedience to the orders of the Senate ; but this was the first instance in history of a victorious general having been put to death for gaining a success which proved the salvation of his country. The proceedings of the Convention against this unfortunate general are chiefly interesting from the evidence they afford of the clear perception which those at the head of affairs had obtained, of the principles in the military art to which the subsequent successes of the Republican forces were chiefly owing. "For long," said Barère, "the principle established by the Great Frederick has been recognised, that the best way to take advantage of the courage of the soldier is to accumulate the troops in particular points in large masses. Instead of doing this, you have divided them into separate detachments, and the generals intrusted with their command have generally had to combat superior forces. The Committee of Public Salvation, fully aware of the danger, had sent the most positive instructions to the generals to fight in large masses ; you have disregarded their orders, and, in consequence, reverses have followed." From these expressions, it is not difficult to recognise the influence which the master mind of Carnot had already acquired in the direction of military affairs.¹

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1793.

¹ Corresp. du Com. de Salut Public, i. 231. Jom. iv. 69. Toul. iv. 130.

To compensate so many reverses, the Allies at length sat down before Maubeuge, an important fortress, the possession of which would have opened the plains of St Quentin and the capital to invasion, and the siege of which, undertaken at an earlier period, and by the main strength of their forces, would have determined, in all probability, the success of the war. Landrecies was already blockaded, and the French troops, avowedly inferior in the field, were all concentrated in intrenched camps within their own frontier. A vigorous effort was indispensable to prevent the Allies from carrying these strongholds, and taking up their winter quarters without opposition in the French territory. In these alarming circumstances, the Committee

69. Maubeuge is besieged. Jourdan takes the command of the army. Sept. 29.

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1793.

of Public Salvation alone did not despair of the fortunes of the Republic. Trusting with confidence to their own energy, and the immense multitude of the levies ordered, they took the most vigorous measures for the public defence, and, by incessantly urging on the new conscripts, soon raised the forces in the different intrenched camps, on the Flemish frontier, to one hundred and thirty thousand men. Great part, it is true, formed but a motley group ; peasants, without arms or uniforms, fiercely debating every question of politics, forming themselves into battalions, and choosing their own officers, presented a force little competent to face, in the open field, the regular forces of Austria and the Confederation. But the possession of so many fortified towns and intrenched camps gave them the means of organising and disciplining these tumultuary masses, and enabled the regular troops, amounting to a hundred thousand men, to keep the field. At the head of the whole was placed General JOURDAN,* a young officer hitherto untried in separate command, though distinguished in subordinate situations, but who, placed between victory and the scaffold, had sufficient confidence in his own talents to accept the perilous alternative.¹

¹ Toul. iv.
133, 134.
Jom. iv. 112,
114, 115,
116.

70.
Vigorous
measures of
the Commit-
tee of Public
Salvation.

At the same time the most energetic measures were taken by the Committee of Public Salvation. All France was declared in a state of siege, and the authorities were authorised to take all the steps necessary to provide for the public defence in such an emergency. "The revolu-

* Jean Baptiste Jourdan, one of the first generals of the Revolution who rose to great distinction, and who afterwards became Marshal of France, was born at Limoges on the 2d April 1762. His father was an obscure surgeon ; and he enlisted at the age of sixteen as a simple private in the regiment of Auxerrois. He served in that capacity in the American War, and, having returned to France on the termination of that contest, he obtained his discharge. Soon after he married a *marchande de modes*, and set up a haberdashery shop, but on so humble a scale, that the future marshal of France carried his pack on his back from fair to fair. In autumn 1791, when recruits for the army were enlisted in every part of France, he entered as a volunteer in one of the new battalions ; and, as his experience gave him a great advantage over his pacific comrades, he was at once named by acclamation chief of the second battalion of Haute Vienne. At its head he served, during the campaign of 1792, under Lafayette ; in the whole of which the admirable condition of the battalion, as well as his

tionary laws," said Robespierre, " must be executed with rapidity ; delay and inactivity have been the cause of our reverses. Henceforward the time allowed for the execution of the laws must be fixed, and delay punished with death."

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1793.

St Just drew a sombre picture of the state of the Republic, Oct. 10.

and the necessity of striving vigorously against the manifold dangers which surrounded them. Having excited the highest degree of terror in the Assembly, he obtained their consent to the following resolutions:—That the subsistence requisite for each department should be accurately estimated, and all the superfluity placed at the disposal of the state, and subjected to forced requisitions, either for the armies, the cities, or departments, that stood in need of it ; that these requisitions should be exclusively regulated by a commission appointed for that purpose by the Convention ; that Paris should be provisioned for a year ; a tribunal instituted for the trial of all those who should commit any offence against these measures, destined to provide for the public subsistence : the government of France declared revolutionary till the conclusion of a general peace, and, until that arrived, a dictatorial power be vested in the Committee of Public Salvation and the Convention ; and that a revolutionary army, consisting of six thousand men, and twelve hundred cannoneers, be established at Paris, and cantoned there at the expense of the more opulent among the citizens.¹ It was proposed in the Cordeliers, that to this should be added a provision for the establishment of an ambulatory guillotine,

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxvi. 147,
151. Th.
v. 278.

own courage and skill, attracted general attention. In consequence he was, on 27th May 1793, appointed general of brigade, and, two months after, general of division, in which last capacity he commanded the advanced guard of Houchard, which defeated the English and raised the siege of Dunkirk. By a singular combination of chances, characteristic of those days of revolution, the same victory which brought Houchard, the commander-in-chief, to the guillotine, raised Jourdan, who led the advanced guard, to the highest destinies ; for he was shortly after appointed by Carnot to the command of the great army destined to raise the siege of Maubeuge. He gained the battle of Fleurus in 1794 ; but was entirely defeated by the Archduke Charles in Germany in 1796, and by Wellington in Spain in 1813. He was rather a methodical, calm, and intrepid general, than endowed with any great genius for war.—*Biographie Universelle*, lxxviii. 294, 296.

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1793.

to be attached to every army ; but this was not adopted by the Convention. The revolutionary army was instantly raised, and composed of the most ardent Jacobins ; and the Commission of Subsistence installed in its important and all-powerful sovereignty.

71.

Vast forces
of the Allies,
and firmness
of the Con-
vention.

The force of the Allies was still above a hundred and twenty thousand strong, and displayed a numerous and splendid array of cavalry, to which there was nothing comparable on the side of the Republicans. But after taking into account the blockading and besieging forces, and those stationed at a distance, they could not bring above sixty thousand into the field. This army was, early in October, concentrated between Maubeuge and Avesnes, where they awaited the approach of the force destined to raise the siege. This measure had now become indispensably necessary, as the condition of the garrison of Maubeuge was daily growing more desperate, and the near approach of the besiegers' batteries had spread terror in the city and discouragement among the soldiers. Imitating the firmness of the Roman Senate, the Convention had sold the estates of the emigrants on which the Allies were encamped, and sent the most peremptory orders to Jourdan to attack without delay the enemy's force, and drive him out of the French territory. The Duke of York, too, hearing of the concentration of the Republican force, was rapidly advancing with above twenty-five thousand men, and, unless the attack was speedily made, it was certain that his force would be joined to the allied army.¹

¹ *Jom. iv.*
118, 121,
129. *Toul.*
iv. 135.

72.

Jourdan ad-
vances to
raise the
siege.
Battle of
Wattignies,
and raising
of the siege.

Impelled by so many motives, Jourdan approached the Austrian position, the key of which was the village of Wattignies. After some skirmishing on the 14th, a general battle took place on the 15th October, in which, after varying success, the Republicans were worsted with the loss of twelve hundred men. Instructed by this failure that a change of the method of attack was indispensable, Jourdan, in the night, accumulated his forces against the

decisive point, and at break of day, on the 16th, assailed Wattignies with three columns, while a concentric fire of artillery shattered the troops who defended it. In the midst of the roar of cannon, which were discharged with uncommon vigour, the Republican airs which rose from the French lines could be distinctly heard by the Austrians. The village was speedily carried by this skilful combination of force, while, at the same time, the appearance of the reserve of Jourdan on the left flank of the Allies completed the discouragement of Cobourg, and induced a general retreat, after sustaining a loss of six thousand men. This resolution was unfortunate and unnecessary, for on other points his army had been eminently successful, and the arrival of the Duke of York, who was within a day's march, would have enabled him to maintain his position, and convert his partial into a total success. It is related by Plutarch, that on one occasion, in Roman story, after a doubtful battle, some god called out in the night that they had lost one man less than their enemies, and in consequence they kept their ground, and gained all the advantages of a victory. How often does such tenacious firmness convert an incipient disaster into an important advantage !¹

CHAP.
XIII.1793.
Oct. 16.

¹ Hard. ii.
406, 409.
Jom. iv. 134,
135. Th. v.
323, 330.
Toul. iv.
136, 138.

The raising of the siege, and retreat of the Allies beyond the Sambre, exposed to view the gigantic works which they had constructed for the reduction of the city, and which, with a little more vigour on their part in concentrating their forces, would undoubtedly have proved successful. As it was, the success of the Republicans on this point counterbalanced the alarming intelligence received from other quarters, and allayed a dangerous ferment which was commencing in the capital. The advantage gained by them in this action proved how incompetent the old and methodical tactics of the Imperialists were to contend with the new and able system which Carnot had introduced into the Republican armies, and which their immense levies enabled them to execute

73.
Causes of
this disaster
to the Allies.

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.

with reckless audacity, and never-failing success. Jourdan had nearly sixty thousand men to raise the siege. By leaving only fifteen thousand to man the works, Cobourg might have opposed to him a nearly equal force ; and an action, under such circumstances, from the great inferiority of the French in discipline, would infallibly have led to a defeat, which would speedily have brought about the reduction of the town. Instead of which, by leaving thirty-five thousand round the fortress, he exposed himself, with only thirty thousand men, to the shock of sixty thousand Republicans, and ultimately was compelled to raise the siege.¹

¹ *Jom. iv.*
134, 148.
Toul. iv.
136.

74.
Conclusion
of the cam-
paign, and
appoint-
ment of
Pichegru to
the com-
mand of the
army.

Nothing more of importance was undertaken in Flanders before the close of the campaign ; a movement of the French, threatening the right of the Allies towards the sea, was not persisted in, and, after various unimportant changes, both parties went into winter quarters. The headquarters of Cobourg were established at Bavay ; those of the Republicans at Guicé, where a vast intrenched camp was formed for the protection and disciplining of the Revolutionary masses which were daily arriving for the army, but for the most part in a miserable state of equipment and efficiency. Insatiable in their expectations of success, the Committee of Public Salvation removed Jourdan from the supreme command, and conferred it on PICHEGRU,* formerly a schoolfellow of Napoleon,² an

² *Th. v. 328,*
332. Toul.
iv. 136, 137.
Jom. iv. 134,
148.

* Charles Pichegru was born at Arbois, in 1761, of obscure parents. He received the rudiments of education in his native town at the college of the Minimes, where he early evinced an extraordinary talent for the exact sciences. So much were the worthy monks who presided over that establishment struck with his abilities in this respect, that they sent him to the military college of Brienne, where he was at the time Napoleon entered it, to whom he was for some years a sort of preceptor, like the monitors in the Lancasterian schools. At the age of twenty he enlisted as a private in the 1st regiment of artillery, with which he served in the last campaigns of the American War, and studied, alike in his own regiment and in the ranks of his enemies, the theory and practice of artillery. From the English marine service, in particular, to which he was often opposed, he adopted several important improvements, the knowledge of which gave him such an advantage over his other comrades, that, on his return, he was made adjutant of his regiment, which rank he held when the Revolution broke out. Conscious of talents which had not yet attained their proper sphere of action, he immediately and vehemently adopted its

officer distinguished in the campaign of the Rhine, a favourite of Robespierre and St Just, and possessed of the talent, activity, and enterprise suited to those perilous times, when the risk was greater to a commander from domestic tyranny than foreign warfare.

After the capture of Mayence, the Imperialists, reinforced by forty thousand excellent troops, who had been employed in the siege of that city, could have assembled one hundred thousand men for offensive operations in the plains of the Palatinate, while those of the enemy did not exceed eighty thousand. Everything promised success to vigorous operations ; but the Allies, paralysed by intestine divisions, remained in an inexplicable state of inactivity, and separated their fine army into four corps, which were placed opposite to the lengthened lines of their adversaries. The Prussians were chiefly to blame for this torpor. They had secretly adopted the resolution, now that Mayence, the barrier of Northern Germany, was secure, to contribute no further efficient aid to the prosecution of the war. For two months they remained there in perfect inactivity, the jealousy of the sovereigns concerning the affairs of Poland being equalled by the rivalry of the generals for the command of the armies. Both monarchies had bitter cause afterwards to lament this policy ; for never again were their own armies on the

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1793.

75.
Campaign
on the
Rhine.
Inactivity
of the Prus-
sians, but
the French
are defeated
at Pirma-
sens.

principles ; but from the very first abstained from the innumerable crimes which were committed in its name. He frequented the Jacobin clubs which, in imitation of the great one at Paris, had arisen in all the departments, and was president of that at Besançon, when, on the formation of a battalion of volunteers in that town in April 1792, he was by acclamation chosen its chief. Pichegru found his men a motley crowd of ardent politicians, who were discussing all subjects, civil and military, with the same license as in the Jacobin Club ; and it was with no small difficulty, and only by the combined influence of a great character and superior acquaintance with military affairs, that he succeeded in reducing them to some degree of subordination. His first campaign was on the Upper Rhine, at the head of his battalion, in 1792 ; but at the close of that year he was appointed, from his great abilities, to a situation on the staff, and he was rapidly promoted to the rank of general of brigade and of division. In October 1793 he received the command of the army on the Upper Rhine from St Just and Lebas, the Commissioners of the Convention, and from thenceforward his name became blended with the stream of European history.—See *Biographie Universelle*, xxxiv. 274, 275.

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1793.

Sept. 14.

¹ Jom. iv.
75, 88, 91.
Toul. iv.
138, 140.
Hard. ii.
342.

Rhine so formidable, or those of the Republicans in such a state of disorganisation. Wearied at length with the torpor of their opponents, and pressed by the reiterated orders of the Convention to undertake something decisive, the French general, Moreau, who commanded the army of the Moselle, commenced an attack on the Prussian corps posted at Pirmasens. The Republican columns advanced with intrepidity to the attack, but when they approached the Prussian redoubts, a terrible storm of grape arrested their advance. At the same time their flanks were turned by the Duke of Brunswick, and a heavy fire of artillery carried disorder into their masses, which soon fell back, and precipitated themselves in confusion into the neighbouring ravines. In this affair, the Republicans lost four thousand men, and twenty-two pieces of cannon; a disaster which might have proved fatal to the campaign, had it been as much improved as it was neglected by the allied commanders.¹

76.

Their lines
are stormed
at Weissen-
burg. They
are totally
routed.
Oct. 13.

The King of Prussia, a few days after, left the army to repair to Poland, in order to pursue, in concert with Russia, his plans of aggrandisement at the expense of that unhappy country; and the Allies, having at length agreed on a plan of joint operations, resumed the offensive. The French occupied the ancient and celebrated lines of Weissenburg, constructed in former times for the protection of the Rhenish frontier from German invasion. They stretched from the town of Lauterburg on the Rhine, through the village of Weissenburg to the Vosges mountains, and thus closed all access from that side into Alsace. For four months that they had been occupied by the Republicans, all the resources of art had been employed in strengthening them. The recent successes of the Allies had brought them to the extreme left of this position, and they formed the design of attacking it from left to right, and forcing an abandonment of the whole intrenchments. A simultaneous assault was made by the Prussians, under the Duke of Brunswick, on the left of

the lines, by the defiles in the Vosges mountains, while the Austrians, under Prince Waldeck, crossed the Rhine, and turned the right, and Wurmser himself, with the main body, endeavoured to force the centre. The attack on the right by Lauterburg obtained only a momentary success. But Wurmser carried several redoubts in the centre, and soon got possession of Weissenburg; and the left having been turned and forced back, the whole army retired in confusion, and some of the fugitives fled as far as Strassburg. Such was the tardiness of the Allies, that the French lost only one thousand men in this general rout, which, if duly improved, might have occasioned the loss of their whole army.¹

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1793.

¹ Hard. ii.
424, 425.
Toul. iv.
140, 141,
142. Jom.
iv. 96, 97,
104.

But this important success, which once more opened the territory of the Republic to a victorious enemy, and spread the utmost consternation through the towns of Alsace, led to no results, and, by developing the designs of Austria upon this province, contributed to widen the breach between that power and her wavering ally. Although, therefore, a powerful reaction commenced among the nobles in Alsace, and a formidable party was formed in Strassburg, to favour the Imperial projects, nothing material was undertaken by their armies.—Wurmser wasted in festivity and rejoicings the precious moments of incipient terror; the Convention got time to recover from its alarm, and the Committee of Public Salvation took the most energetic measures to restore the democratic fervour in the shaken districts. A revolutionary force, under the command of a ferocious leader named Bandet, traversed the province, confiscating without mercy the property of the suspected individuals, and spreading, by the multitude of their arrests, the fear of death among all. “Marat,” said Bandet, “has demanded only two hundred thousand heads; were they a million we would furnish them.” To take advantage of the excitement occasioned by these menaces, Wurmser advanced to the neighbourhood of Strassburg, where the

77.
Leads to
no results.
Capture of
Fort Vau-
ban, and
cruel re-
venge of the
French in
Alsace.

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XIII.

1793.

whole constituted authorities offered to surrender it to the Imperialists, in the name of Louis XVII. The Austrian commander, however, fettered by orders from Vienna, which prohibited him from doing anything that might prejudice their system of methodical conquest, declined to take possession of the city on these terms, and moved the Prussians to Saverne, in order to force back the Republicans who were accumulating on that point. This project proved entirely unsuccessful; the Prussians were driven back; and Wurmser, unable to undertake the siege of Strassburg, was obliged to withdraw, and confine his operations to the blockade of Landau and the siege of Fort Vauban, which capitulated with its garrison of three thousand men on the 14th November. The inhabitants of Strassburg, thus abandoned to their fate, experienced the whole weight of Republican vengeance. Seventy persons of the most distinguished families were put to death, while terror and confiscation reinstated the sway of the Convention over the unhappy province. No sooner was the extent of the conspiracy ascertained, than St Just and Lebas were despatched by the Convention, and speedily put in force the terrific energy of the Revolution. The blood of the Royalists immediately flowed in torrents; it was a sufficient ground for condemnation that any inhabitant had remained in the villages occupied by the Allies; and a fourth of the families of the province, decimated by the guillotine, fled into the neighbouring districts of Switzerland, and were speedily enrolled in the lists of proscription.¹*

The secession of Prussia from the confederacy now became daily more and more evident. Wurmser in vain endeavoured to engage its army in any combined move-

¹ Hard. ii.
425, 426.
Toul. iv.
143, 144,
186. Th.
vi. 48, 49.
Jom. iv.
104, 105,
111, 150.

* "Il était temps que St Just vint auprès de cette malheureuse armée, et qu'il portât de vigoureux coups de hache au fanatisme des Alsaciens, à leur indolence, à leur stupidité Allemande, à la cupidité à la perfidie des riches. Il a tout vivifié, animé, régénéré: et pour achever cet ouvrage, il nous arrive de tous les coins une colonne d'apôtres révolutionnaires de solides sans-culottes. *Sainte Guillotine* est dans la plus brillante activité, et la bienfaisante terreur produit ici d'une manière miraculeuse ce qu'on devait espérer d'un siècle au moins

ments ; orders from the cabinet constrained the Duke of Brunswick to a line of conduct as prejudicial to his fame as a commander, as it was injurious to the character of his country. On his return to Berlin, Frederick William was assailed by so many representations from his ministers as to the deplorable state of the finances, and the exhaustion of the national strength, in a contest foreign to the real interests of the nation, at the very time when the affairs of Poland required their undivided attention, and the greatest possible display of force in that quarter, that he at first adopted the resolution to recall all his troops from the Rhine, except the small contingent which he was bound to furnish as a prince of the Empire. Orders to that effect were actually transmitted to the Prussian general. The cabinet of Vienna, informed of the danger, made the most pressing remonstrances against such an untimely and ruinous defection, in which they were so well seconded by those of London and St Petersburg that this resolution was rescinded, and, in consideration of a large Austrian subsidy, Prussia engaged, in appearance with sincerity, to continue the contest. But orders were at the same time secretly given by the cabinet of Berlin to the Duke of Brunswick to temporise as much as possible, and engage the Prussian troops in no serious enterprise, or any conquest which might turn to the advantage of the Austrians. The effect of this soon appeared in the removal of the Prussian mortars and cannon from the lines before Landau, at the moment when the bombardment was going on with the greatest prospect of success. Shortly after they withdrew so large a part of the blockading force, that the garrison was enabled to communicate freely with the adjacent country.¹

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.

78.

Secession
of Prussia
from the
alliance.¹ Hard. ii.
425, 431.

par la raison et la philosophie. Quel maître bougre que ce garçon-la ! La collection de ses arrêtés sera sans contredit un des plus beaux monumens historiques de la Révolution. Le moment de la justice terrible est arrivé, et toutes les têtes coupables doivent passer sous le niveau national.”—GATTEAU au Citoyen DAUBIGNY ; *Strasbourg, 27 Brumaire, An. 2.—Papiers trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 247.

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.

79.

Disunion of
the Allies,
who are
driven over
the Rhine,
and the
siege of Lan-
dau is raised.
Nov. 17.

Dec. 26.

Dec. 30.

Jan. 19,
1794.

Meanwhile the Committee of Public Salvation, very different from their tardy and divided opponents, did not confine their views to the subjugation of the Royalists in Alsace. They aspired to the complete deliverance of the Republican territory from the enemy's forces. To raise the blockade of Landau, thirty thousand men from the armies of the Moselle and the Rhine were placed under the orders of Pichegru, who were designed to penetrate the allied lines between the cantonments of the Austrian and Prussian forces ; and these were supported by thirty-five thousand under General Hoche, who advanced from the side of La Saare. After some preparatory movements, various success, and many partial actions, the Republicans attacked the covering army of the Duke of Brunswick in great force on the morning of the 26th December, who were in position near the castle of Geisberg, a little in front of Weissenburg. Such was the dissension between the two commanders, in consequence of the evident reluctance of the Prussians to engage, that a warm altercation took place between them, in presence of their respective officers, on the field of battle. The result, as might have been expected, was, that the Allies, vigorously attacked in their centre, were driven from their position. After some ineffectual attempts to make a stand on the left bank of the Rhine, their whole army, in great confusion, crossed to the right bank, at Philippsburg, raising the blockade of Landau, leaving their recent conquest of Fort Vauban to its fate, and completely evacuating in that quarter the French territory. Spires and Worms were speedily reconquered, and Fort Vauban soon after evacuated. The Republican armies, rapidly advancing, appeared before the gates of Mannheim ; and Germany, so recently victorious, began to tremble for its own frontier. These important results demonstrated the superior military combination which was now exerted on the part of the French to that of the Allies. Forty thousand Prussians and Saxons were in a state of inacti-

vity on the other side of the Vosges mountains, while the Austrians, overmatched by superior and concentrated forces, were driven across the Rhine. The French accumulated forces from different armies, to break through one weakly defended point ; while the Allies were in such a state of discord that they could not, even in the utmost peril, render any effectual assistance to each other.* It was not difficult to foresee what would be the result of such a contest.^{1†}

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XIII.

1793.

¹ Hard. ii.
439, 441.
Jom. iv. 154,
177. Th.
vi. 48, 49.
Toul. iv.
221, 227.

The campaign on the Pyrenean frontier, during this year, was not characterised by any event of importance. At the first breaking out of the war, in February, the Spanish government made vigorous exertions to increase its forces ; the zeal and patriotism of the inhabitants soon supplied the deficiencies of the military establishment, and they were enabled to put two considerable armies on foot. One was of thirty thousand men, destined to invade Rousillon ; the other, of twenty-five thousand, to penetrate by the Bidassoa, on the side of Bayonne. The Republicans on the western entrance of the Pyrenees occupied a line from St Jean Pied-de-Port to the mouth of the Bidassoa, strengthened by three intrenched camps ; while the Spaniards were stationed on the heights of San Marcial, the destined theatre of honourable achievement to their arms in a more glorious war. On the 14th April, the Spaniards from their position opened a vig-

80.
Campaign
on the
Spanish
frontier.
Successes
of the
Spaniards
on the Bi-
dassoa.

April 14.

* Such was the dissension between the Austrians and Prussians that their officers published mutual recriminations against each other, and fought duels in support of their respective sides of the question.—HARD. ii. 442.

† So manifestly were the divisions of the Allies and the defection of the Prussians the cause of all the disasters of the campaign on the German frontier, that the Duke of Brunswick himself did not hesitate to ascribe them to that cause. On 24th January 1794, he wrote to Prince Louis of Prussia in these terms : “ I have been enveloped in circumstances as distressing as they were extraordinary, which have imposed upon me the painful necessity of acting as I have done. What a misfortune that external and internal dissensions should so frequently have paralysed the movements of the armies, at the very time when the greatest activity was necessary ! If, after the fall of Mayence, they had fallen on Houchard, whom they would have beaten, they would have prevented the march of troops to the north ; and, by consequence, the checks of Dunkirk and Maubeuge : Saarlouis, ill provisioned, and destitute at that

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XIII.

1793.

May 1.

June 6.

orous fire on the French line, and, during the confusion occasioned by it among their opponents, crossed the Bidassoa, and carried a fort which was soon after abandoned. This attack was only the prelude of a more decisive one, which took place on the 1st May, when the French were driven from one of their camps with the loss of fifteen pieces of cannon; and on the 6th June they were expelled from another stronghold, and forced into St Jean Pied-de-Port, after being deprived of all the cannon and ammunition which it contained. After these disasters, the Republican commander was indefatigable in his endeavours to restore the courage and discipline of his troops; and, deeming them at length sufficiently experienced for offensive operations, he made a general attack, on the 29th August, on the posts which the Spaniards had fortified on the French territory. He was, however, repulsed, with considerable loss, and disabled from undertaking any movement of consequence for the remainder of the campaign.¹

¹ Jom. iv.
273, 282.
Ann. Reg.
xxxiii. 396,
397, 398.

81.

And Eastern
Pyrenees.
Invasion of
Rousillon,
and defeat of
the French
at Truellas.
April 21.
May 18.

Operations of more importance took place during the same campaign on the eastern side. The Spaniards under Don Ricardos, in the middle of April, invaded Rousillon; and on the 21st a small body gained an advantage over an equal number of French. This was followed soon after by a general attack on the French camp, which ended in the defeat of the Republicans. Ere long, the

period of any shelter from a bombardment, would have fallen in fifteen days. Alsace thus would have been turned by the Saare; the capture of the lines of Lauter would have been attended with more substantial benefits; and, if the Republican army of the Rhine had been by that means separated from that of the Moselle, Landau would infallibly have fallen. I implore you to use your efforts to prevent the undue separation of the army into detachments; when this is the case, weak at every point, it is liable to be cut up in detail. At Mayence the fruits of the whole war were lost; and there is no hope that a third campaign will repair the disasters of the two preceding. The same causes will divide the allied powers which have hitherto divided them; the movements of the armies will suffer from them as they have suffered; their march will be embarrassed, retarded, prevented; and the delay in the re-establishment of the Prussian army, unavoidable, perhaps from political causes, will become the cause in the succeeding campaign of incalculable disasters."—See HARD. ii. 444, 448.

forts of Bellegarde and Villa Franca were taken ; and Ricardos, pursuing his advantages, on the 29th August attacked a large body of French at Millas, who were totally defeated, with the loss of fifteen pieces of cannon. The result of this was, that the invaders passed Perpignan, and interrupted the communication between Languedoc and Rousillon. But the Convention, alarmed at the rapid progress of the Spaniards, at length took the most vigorous measures to reinforce their armies ; and the energetic government of the Committee of Public

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XIII.
1793.
Aug. 29.

Sept. 17.

Sept. 22.

Salvation succeeded in arresting the invasion. Two divisions of the French, about fifteen thousand strong, were directed to move against the Spaniards under Don Juan Courten, who had not above six thousand men at Peyrestortes ; and their attack was combined with so much skill that the enemy was assailed in front, both flanks, and rear, at the same time. After a gallant defence, the Spaniards were forced to commence a retreat, which, though conducted for some time in good order, at length was converted into a flight, during which they lost one thousand men killed, and fifteen hundred prisoners, besides all their artillery and camp equipage. Elated by this success, the Republicans proposed a general attack upon the Spanish army, which took place at Truellas. Twenty thousand chosen troops, divided into three columns, advanced against the Spanish camp. After an obstinate resistance, that which attacked the centre, under the command of Dagobert, carried the intrenchments, and was on the point of gaining a glorious victory, when Courten, coming up with the Spanish reserve, prolonged the combat, and gave time for Don Ricardos, who had defeated the attack on his left, to advance at the head of four regiments of cavalry, which decided the day. Three French battalions laid down their arms, and the remainder, formed into squares, retreated in spite of the utmost efforts of the Spanish cavalry ; not, however, till they had sustained a loss of four thousand men and ten pieces of artillery.¹

¹ Jom. iv.
241, 244,
246, 248.
Ann. Reg.
xxxiii. 399.

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.

82.

Second defeat of the
French at
Perpignan.

Dec. 7.

Dec. 14.

Dec. 20.

¹ Jom. iv.
251, 262,
270, 273.
Ann. Reg.
xxxiii. 400.

Dagobert was immediately displaced from the supreme command for this disaster ; and the Republicans, under Davoust,* being shortly after reinforced by fifteen thousand men, levied under the decree of the 23d August, Ricardos was constrained, notwithstanding his success, to remain upon the defensive. He retired, therefore, to a strong intrenched camp near Boulon, where he was attacked on the 3d October by the French forces. From that time to the beginning of December a variety of actions took place, unattended by any decisive advantage on either side, but without the Spanish troops ever being dislodged from their position. At that period, Ricardos, having been strongly reinforced, resolved to resume the offensive. Early on the 7th December he disposed his troops in four columns, and, having surprised their advanced posts, commenced an unexpected attack upon the French lines. The Republicans, many of whom were inexperienced levies, instantly took to flight, and the whole army was routed, with the loss of forty-six pieces of cannon and two thousand five hundred men. The Spaniards followed up this success by another expedition against the town of Port Vendre, which they carried, with all the artillery mounted on its defences ; and soon after Collioure surrendered to their forces, with above eighty pieces of cannon ; while the Marquis Amarillas overthrew the right, and carried such terror into the ranks of the inexperienced Republicans that many battalions disbanded themselves and fled into the interior. In the end, the whole fell back in confusion under the cannon of Perpignan. By these repeated disasters the French army was so much discouraged that almost all the national guards left their colours, and the general-in-chief announced to the Convention that he was only at the head of eight thousand men.¹ Had the Spanish commander been aware of the state of his opponents, he might, by a vigorous attack, have completed their ruin

* See a biography of Davoust, *infra*, c. xxiii. § 50.

before the reinforcements arrived from Toulon, which, in the beginning of the following month, restored the balance of the contending forces.

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1793.

Important events also took place on the side of the Maritime Alps. In that quarter, at the conclusion of the preceding campaign, the French remained masters of the territory and city of Nice. An expedition projected by the Republicans against Sardinia totally failed. When the season was so far advanced as to permit operations in the Maritime Alps, the Piedmontese army, consisting of thirty thousand natives and ten thousand Austrians, was posted along their summits, with the centre at Saorgio, strongly fortified. In the beginning of June, the Republicans, twenty-five thousand strong, commenced an attack in five columns; but, after some partial success, they resumed their position, and, being soon after weakened by detachments for the siege of Toulon, remained on the defensive till the end of July, when they made themselves masters of the Col d'Argentière and the Col de Sauteron, which excited the utmost alarm in the Court of Turin, and prevented them from sending those succours to the army in Savoy, which the powerful diversion occasioned by the siege of Lyons so evidently recommended.¹

83.
Campaign
in the Mari-
time Alps.
Feb. 14.

¹ Jom. iv.
184, 189.
Toul. iv.
216, 217,
218. Th.
v. 38.

The insurrection in Lyons, to be immediately noticed, offered an opportunity for establishing themselves in the south of France, which could hardly have been hoped for by the allied powers. Had sixty thousand regular troops descended from the Alps in Italy, and taken advantage of the effervescence which prevailed in Toulon, Marseilles, and Lyons, the consequences might have been incalculable. But such were the divisions among the Allies that this golden opportunity, never destined to recur, was neglected, and the Court of Turin contented themselves, during that unhoped-for diversion, with merely aiming at the expulsion of the French from the valleys of the Arc and the Isère. This was no difficult

84.
Feeble ir-
ruption on
the side of
Chamberry.

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XIII.

1793.

Aug. 15.

Sept. 11.

¹ Jom. iv.
195, 206.
Bot. i. 294,
300, 309.
Th. v. 307,
310.

85.
Great dis-
content in
the south of
France.

matter, as the Piedmontese troops were already masters of the summits of Mont Cenis and the Little St Bernard, and the French, in the valleys beneath, were severely weakened by detachments for the siege of Lyons. In the middle of August, the Sardinian columns descended the ravines of St Jean de Maurienne and Moutiers, under the command of General Gordon, and, after some trifling engagements, drove the Republicans from these narrow and winding valleys, and compelled them to take refuge under the cannon of Montmelian. But there terminated the success of this feeble invasion. Kellermann, hearing of the advance of the Sardinians, left the siege of Lyons to General Durnuy, and, hastily returning to Chamberry, roused the national guard to resist the enemy. At the moment that they were preparing to follow up their advantages, the French commander anticipated them by a brisk attack, and, after a slight resistance, drove them from the whole ground they had gained, as far as the foot of Mont Cenis. Thus a campaign, from which, if boldly conducted, the liberation of all the south-east of France might have been expected, terminated, after an ephemeral success, in ultimate disgrace.¹

But while the operations of the Allies in their vicinity were thus inefficient, the efforts of the French themselves were of a more decided and glorious character. The insurrection of 31st May, which subjected the legislature to the mob of Paris, and established the Reign of Terror through all France, excited the utmost indignation in the southern provinces. Marseilles, Toulon, and Lyons, openly espoused the Girondist cause; they were warmly attached to freedom, but it was that regulated freedom which provides for the protection of all, not that which subjects the more opulent classes to the despotism of the lower. The discontents went on increasing till the middle of July, when Chalier and Riard, the leaders of the Jacobin Club at Lyons, were arrested by the national guard—which was nearly all on the Royalist side—and

condemned to death. Chalier, who, during the period he was in power at Lyons, had showed himself equally sanguinary and fanatical, evinced remarkable sensibility in prison, and even shed tears as he caressed a favourite turtle-dove, which his mistress had brought to be the companion and solace of his captivity. His death, which took place by the guillotine, was attended with circumstances peculiarly shocking. Four times the axe descended without severing the head from the body, and at the intervals he was seen to cast a look of reproach on the unskilful executioner. He behaved with great firmness in his last moments. From that time these cities were declared in a state of insurrection: the Girondist leaders, perceiving that the Royalist party had gained the ascendancy in Lyons, withdrew, and the citizens openly espoused the Royalist cause. They immediately began to cast cannon, raise intrenchments, and make every preparation for a vigorous defence.¹

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1793.

¹ Th. v. 142,
143. Toul.
iv. 55. Lam.
Hist. des
Gir. vii. 133.

The general discontent first broke out into open violence in Marseilles. At the first intelligence, Kellermann despatched General Carteaux to prevent a corps of ten thousand men, from that city, from effecting a junction with the volunteers from Lyons. Had this junction been effected, there can be no doubt that the whole of the south of France would have thrown off the yoke of the Convention. But Carteaux, after overawing Avignon and Pont St-Esprit, encountered the Marseilles corps, first at Salon, and afterwards at Septèmes, where he totally defeated it, and the following day entered Marseilles. Terror instantly resumed its sway; the prisons were emptied, all the leaders of the Girondists thrown into confinement, and the guillotine, ever in the rear of the Republican armies, was installed in bloody and irresistible sovereignty.²

86.
Abortive in-
surrection at
Marseilles.

² Toul. iv.
63, 66. Th.
v. 74. Jom.
iv. 208, 209.

A large proportion of the citizens of Marseilles fled to Toulon, where they spread the most dismal accounts of the sufferings of their fellow-citizens, and the fate which

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.

87.

Revolt at
Toulon,
which opens
its gates to
the English.

Aug. 27.

awaited that important town if it fell into the hands of the Republicans. It already possessed a population of twenty-five thousand souls, and was warmly opposed to the Revolution, from the suffering which had involved its population ever since its commencement, and the number of officers connected with the aristocracy who had enjoyed situations in the marine under the ancient government. In the extremity to which they were reduced, threatened by the near approach of the Republican forces, and destitute of any adequate means of defence, the inhabitants saw no alternative but to open their harbour to the English fleet, which was cruising in the vicinity, and proclaim Louis XVII. as king. The primary sections were accordingly convoked, and the proposal was unanimously agreed to. The Dauphin was proclaimed; the English squadrons entered the harbour, and the crews of seven ships of the line, who proved refractory, were allowed to retire, while those of the remainder joined the inhabitants. Shortly afterwards a Spanish squadron arrived, bringing with it a considerable reinforcement of land troops, and the allied forces, eight thousand strong, took possession of all the forts in the city. The conduct of the British on this occasion showed that their government was actuated by very different principles from those which had been agreed to at the conference of Antwerp, and exemplified in the case of Valenciennes. Admiral Hood engaged in the most solemn manner, in two different proclamations, to take possession of Toulon solely and exclusively in the name, and for the behoof, of Louis XVII., and to restore the fleet to the monarchical government of France on a general peace.^{1*}

¹ Jom. iv.
209, 211.
Toul. iv.
67, 68.

* In the first proclamation, Admiral Hood said: "If the people declare openly in favour of a monarchical government, and they resolve to put me in possession of the harbour, they shall receive all the succours which the squadron under my command can afford. I declare that property and persons shall be held sacred; we wish only to establish peace. When it is concluded, we shall restore the fleet to France, agreeably to the inventory which shall be made out." In the second he was equally explicit: "Considering that the sections of Toulon, by the Commissioners whom they have sent to me, have made a

Carteaux immediately ordered a detachment of his forces to advance against the insurgents; but the garrison, supported by a body of the national guards of Toulon, marched to meet them, and the Republicans, surprised, were obliged to fall back in confusion. This check proved the necessity of more energetic measures; a large portion of the army of Italy was recalled from the Alps, the national guards of the neighbouring departments were called out, new levies ordered, and the directions of Robespierre immediately began to be acted upon, that Lyons must be burned and razed to the ground, and then the siege of Toulon formed. At the first intelligence of the revolt of Lyons, Kellermann assembled eight thousand men and a small train of artillery to observe the place. But this force was totally insufficient even to maintain its ground before the armed population of the city, which soon amounted to thirty thousand men. A military chest was formed; a paper currency, guaranteed by the principal merchants, issued; cannon in great numbers were cast at a foundry within the walls; and fortifications, under the direction of an able engineer, erected upon the beautiful heights which encircle the city. The command was by common consent conferred on M. DE PRÉCY, a Royalist gentleman of moderate principles, who, in their extremity, had the courage to accept the command of the besieged Lyonnese.* The deputation which was sent to offer him

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1793.

88.

Revolt and
siege of
Lyons.

July 29.

solemn declaration in favour of Louis XVII. and a monarchical government, and that they will use their utmost efforts to break the chains which fetter their country, and re-establish the constitution, as it was accepted by their defunct sovereign in 1789; I repeat, by this present declaration, that I take possession of Toulon, and shall keep it solely as a deposit for Louis XVII., and that only till peace is re-established in France, which I trust is not far distant." — *Proclamation, 28th August 1793*; HARD. ii. 357, 359. These were the true principles of the anti-revolutionary war; very different from those proclaimed by the Austrians on the taking of Valenciennes and Condé. Nor was the subsequent destruction of the fleet, when Toulon was retaken by the Republicans, any departure from good faith in this transaction. England was bound to restore the fleet to a monarchical government and Louis XVII., but not to hand it over to the Revolutionary government, the most bitter enemy of both.

* M. de Précy was a gentleman of moderate fortune, of the district of

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the command found him in his garden, engaged, with a spade in his hand, in the cultivation of his flowers. He at first hesitated to accept it, alleging his advanced years, and the magnitude of the efforts which the Convention would make for their subjugation. "We know them all," replied the deputation; "but we have deliberately weighed the scaffold against the oppression of the Convention, and preferred the scaffold." "And I," said Pr  cy, "accept it with such men." He forthwith took down his coat, which was hanging from the branches of a fruit-tree, re-entered his house, embraced his young wife, girded on his arms, disused since the 10th August, and set out. Such enthusiasm was for long invincible. The troops of the Republicans, though daily increasing, were for six weeks unable to make head against forces so considerable, supported by the ardour of a numerous and enthusiastic population. During the whole of August, accordingly, and the beginning of September, the siege made little progress, and the batteries of the besiegers were scarcely armed. The besieged, meanwhile, made proposals for an accommodation; but the Commissaries for the Convention returned for answer—"Rebels, first show yourselves worthy of pardon, by acknowledging your crime; lay down your arms; deliver up the keys of your city, and deserve the clemency of the Convention by a sincere repentance."¹ But the inhabitants, well aware of the consequence of such submis-

¹ Jom. iv. 186, 187. Th. v. 310, 311. Ann. Reg. xxxiii. 406. Toul. iv. 68, 71. Lam. Hist. des Gir. vii. 140.

Charolais, and had formerly been colonel of the regiment of the Vosges mountains. He belonged to that portion of the old noblesse, unhappily so small, who, throughout the convulsion, adhered to Royalist principles without disgracing themselves, or endangering them by emigration. He had served in Corsica, in Germany, and in the Constitutional Guard of Louis XVI. On the 10th of August, being without a command, after the dissolution of that force by the Girondists, he hastened with the faithful noblesse to offer to the monarch the aid of his single arm. After the overthrow of the throne, he retired to his property of Semur in the Brionnais, alike disdaining to join the ranks of the victorious Jacobins, or follow the general desertion of their country by the Royalist nobles. His air was martial, but his voice and expression of countenance mild and gentle. He had the gift alike of winning the heart and commanding the respect of all who knew him.—See LAMARTINE, *Hist. des Girondins*, vii. 139.

sion, returned for answer, "Conduct so atrocious as yours proves what we have to expect from your clemency; we shall firmly await your arrival; and you will never capture the city but by marching over ruins and piles of dead."

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No sooner were the Convention informed of the entrance of the English into Toulon, than they redoubled their efforts for the subjugation of Lyons. They indignantly rejected the advice of several of their members, in whose bosoms the feelings of humanity were not utterly extinct, for an accommodation with the inhabitants, and took the most energetic measures for the prosecution of the siege. A hundred pieces of cannon, drawn from the arsenals of Besançon and Grenoble, were immediately mounted on the batteries: veteran troops were selected from the army on the frontiers of Piedmont, and four corps formed, which on different sides pressed the outworks of the city. In a succession of contests in the outer intrenchments, the Lyonnese evinced the most heroic valour; but although success was frequently balanced, the besiegers upon the whole had the advantage, and the horrors of war, which they had so strenuously endeavoured to keep at a distance, at length fell on the devoted city. On the 24th September, a terrible bombardment and cannonade, with red-hot shot, was commenced, which was continued without intermission for a whole week. Night and day the flaming tempest fell on the quarter of St Clair, and speedily involved in conflagration the magnificent hotels of that opulent district, the splendid public buildings which had so long adorned the Place Bellecour, and the beautiful quays of the river. Soon after, the arsenal blew up with a terrific explosion. At length the flames reached the great Hospital, one of the noblest monuments of the charity of the past age, now filled with the wounded and dying, from every quarter of the town.¹ A black flag was hoisted on its summit to avert the fury of the besiegers from that last asylum of humanity; but this only

89.

Great efforts
of the Re-
publicans
for its re-
duction, and
cruel con-
duct of the
besiegers.

¹ Jom. iv.
187, 189.
Ann. Reg.
xxxiii. 408.
Toul. iv. 71.
75. Th. v.
206. Lac.
xi. 105.

CHAP.
XIII.

1793.

90.
Dreadful
sufferings
of the in-
habitants.

served to redouble their activity, and guide their shot, which were directed with such unerring aim, that, after the flames had been two-and-forty times extinguished, it was burned to the ground.

The ravages of the bombardment, however, increased the sufferings of the inhabitants, without diminishing their means of defence. The whole people without exception were engaged in the contest. Old men and children, women, and infirm, alike contributed to the support of the cause. Heroism became almost a habit. No sooner was a bomb seen traversing the air than numbers hastened to the quarter where it was likely to fall, to extinguish the fuse before the explosion took place; and if they were fortunate enough to do so, the projectile was put into one of their own mortars, and sent back upon the enemy. If a conflagration broke out, a chain of hands was speedily formed, which conveyed water to the menaced spot. The whole male population was divided into two sections, of which one combated on the ramparts, and the other watched the fires which broke out, and bore provisions and ammunition to the batteries. The women were engaged in the arduous duties of tending the hospitals, and preparing bandages for the wounded. But, notwithstanding these heroic efforts, the immense numbers of the enemy enabled them to make alarming progress. The incessant assaults of the Republicans rendered them masters of the heights of St Croix, which commanded the city from a nearer position; and about the same time the reinforcements which arrived from the southern departments, now thoroughly roused by the efforts of the Convention, enabled the besiegers to cut off all communication between the inhabitants and the country, on which they had hitherto depended for provisions. Before the end of September fifty thousand men were assembled before the walls; and, notwithstanding the most rigid economy in the distribution of food, the pangs of want began to be severely felt. Shortly

after, the garrison of Valenciennes arrived, and, by their skill in the management of artillery, gave a fatal preponderance to the besieging force, while Couthon came up with twenty-five thousand rude mountaineers from the quarter of Auvergne. The hopes of the inhabitants had been chiefly rested on a diversion from the side of Savoy, where the Piedmontese troops were slowly assembling for offensive operations. But these expectations were cruelly disappointed. After a feeble irruption into the valley of St Jean de Maurienne, and some ephemeral success, the Sardinian army, as already noticed, was driven back in disgrace to the foot of Mont Cenis. This disaster, coupled with the pressure of famine, now severely weakened the spirits of the besieged. Yet, though deserted by all the world, and assailed by a force which at length amounted to above sixty thousand men, the inhabitants nobly and resolutely maintained their defence. In vain the bombardment was continued with unexampled severity, and twenty-seven thousand bombs, five thousand shells, and eleven thousand red-hot shot thrown into the city. Regardless of the iron storm, one-half of the citizens manned the works, while the other half watched the flight of the burning projectiles, and carried water to the quarters where the conflagration broke forth.¹

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XIII.
1793.

Sept. 30.

¹ Lac. xi.
107. Toul.
iv. 76. Jom.
iv. 191. Th.
v. 513.

But these efforts, however glorious, could not finally avert the stroke of fate. The Convention, irritated at the slow progress of the siege, deprived Kellermann of the command, and ordered him to the bar of the Convention to give an account of his conduct, although his talent and energy in repelling the Piedmontese invasion had been the salvation of the Republic. The command of the besieging army was given to General Doppet, who received orders instantly to reduce Lyons by fire and sword. To quicken his operations, the savage Couthon, as Commissioner of the Convention, was invested with a despotic authority over the generals, and he instantly

91.
Their heroic
defence.

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resolved to carry Lyons by main force, and employ in the storm the whole sixty thousand men who were engaged in the siege. On the 29th September, a general attack was made by the new commander on the intrenchments of the besieged, the object of which was to force the fortified posts at the point of Perrache, near the confluence of the Saone and the Rhone. After an obstinate resistance, the batteries of St Foix, which commanded that important point, were carried by the Republicans; and the bridge of La Malatierre, which connected it with the opposite bank, was forced. No further intrenchments remained between the assailants and the city; the last moment of Lyons seemed at hand. But Pr  cy hastened to the scene of danger at the head of a chosen band of citizens, and a conflict of the most violent kind ensued. In vain the Republican batteries enfiladed on three sides the column of the assailants; nothing could withstand their heroic valour. Torn on either flank by grape-shot, discharged at fifty yards' distance, the Royalists, headed by Pr  cy, rushed forward, regained the intrenchments which had been lost, and drove back the Republicans from them into the plain of Perrache, as far as the bridge of La Malatierre, with the loss of two thousand men. But notwithstanding all his efforts, he could not prevent them from maintaining their ground on the bridge and heights of St Foix. A more fatal enemy, however, was steadily assailing them within the walls. Famine was consuming the strength of the besieged. All the approaches to the city were vigilantly guarded, and the means of subsistence were all but exhausted. For long the women had renounced the use of bread, in order to reserve it for the combatants, but they were soon reduced to half a pound a-day of this humble fare. The remainder of the inhabitants lived on a scanty supply of oats, which was daily served out with the most rigid economy from the public magazine.¹ But even these resources were at length exhausted; in the beginning of

¹ Lac. xi.
104, 108,
110. Ann.
Reg. xxxiii.
410. Jom.
iv. 192. Th.
v. 314, 315.
Toul. iv. 79.
Bot. i. 247.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. vii.
155.

October, provisions of every kind had failed ; and the thirty Sections of Lyons, subdued by stern necessity, were compelled to nominate deputies to proceed to the hostile camp.

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The brave Précý, however, even in this extremity, disdained to submit. With generous devotion, he resolved to force his way, at the head of a chosen band, through the enemy's lines, and seek in foreign climes that freedom of which France had become unworthy. On the night of the 9th October, the heroic column, consisting of two thousand men, the flower of Lyons, set forth with their wives and children, and what little property they could save from the ruin of their fortunes. They began in two columns their perilous march, guided by the light of their burning habitations, amid the tears and blessings of those friends who remained behind. Scarcely had they set out, however, when a bomb fell into an ammunition-waggon, by the explosion of which great numbers were killed. Notwithstanding this disaster, the head of the column broke the division opposed to it, and forced its way through the lines of the besiegers. But an overwhelming force soon assailed the centre and rear. As they proceeded, they found themselves enveloped on every side ; all the heights were lined with cañnon, and the houses filled with soldiers ; an indiscriminate massacre took place, in which men, women, and infants alike perished ; and, of the whole who left Lyons, scarcely fifty forced their way with Précý into the Swiss territories. Précý himself remained in exile till 1814, when he re-entered France with Louis XVIII. He received no recompense or mark of distinction from the Bourbons for his glorious deeds, and not even a stone marks his humble sepulchre in the country which his heroism had adorned.¹ In this, as in other particulars, that ill-fated family too closely resembled their predecessors in misfortune, the Stuarts, of whom it was said with equal truth and justice, that their "restoration was

92.
Précý forces
his way
through the
besiegers'
lines.

¹ Ann. Reg.
xxxiii. 410.
Lac. xi. 113.
Th. v. 315.
Jom. iv. 194.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. vii.
166.

CHAP. truly accompanied by an act of oblivion and indemnity ;
 XIII. but the oblivion was of their friends, the indemnity to
 1793. their enemies."

93.
 Town capi-
 tulates, and
 sanguinary
 measures of
 the Conven-
 tion.
 Oct. 10.

On the following day the Republicans took possession of Lyons. The troops observed strict discipline ; they were lodged in barracks, or bivouacked on the Place Bellecour and the Terreaux : the inhabitants indulged a fleeting hope that a feeling of humanity had at length touched the bosoms of their conquerors. They little knew the bitterness of Republican hatred. Lyons was not spared ; it was only reserved for cold-blooded vengeance. No sooner was the town subdued, than Couthon entered at the head of the authorities of the Convention. He instantly reinstated the Jacobin municipality in full sovereignty, and commissioned them to seek out and denounce the guilty. He wrote to Paris that the inhabitants consisted of three classes :—1. The guilty rich. 2. The selfish rich. 3. The ignorant workmen, incapable of any wickedness. "The first," he said, "should be guillotined, and their houses destroyed ; the fortunes of the second confiscated ; and the third removed elsewhere, and their place supplied by a Republican colony."¹ "On the ruins of this infamous city," said Barère, in the name of the Committee of Public Salvation, when he announced that Lyons was subdued, "shall be raised a monument to the eternal glory of the Convention ; and on it shall be engraved the inscription : '*Lyons made war on freedom : Lyons is no more.*'" The name of the unfortunate city was suppressed by a decree of the Convention ; it was ordered to be termed the "Commune Affranchie." * All the inhabitants were

¹ Jom. iv.
 194.

Oct. 12.

* The following is the tenor of this decree :—

"I.—Tous les habitans de Lyon seront désarmés ; leurs armes seront distribuées sur-le-champ aux défenseurs de la République—une partie sera remise aux patriotes de Lyon, qui ont été opprimés par les riches et les contre-révolutionnaires.

"II.—La ville de Lyon sera détruite. Tout ce qui fut habité par le riche sera démoli. Il ne restera que la maison du pauvre, les habitations des pat-

appointed to be disarmed, and the whole city destroyed, with the exception only of the poor's-house, the manuf-
 factories, the great workshops, the hospitals, and public
 monuments. A commission of five members was appointed
 to inflict vengeance on the inhabitants ; at their head
 were Couthon and Collot d'Herbois. The former pre-
 sided over the destruction of the edifices, the latter over
 the extermination of the inhabitants.¹

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1793.

¹ *Jom. iv.*
194. *Moni-*
teur, Oct.
12.

The means taken by these worthy proconsuls of the
 Convention to carry their measures into effect, and work
 the people up to that pitch of sanguinary enthusiasm
 when they might be the ready instruments of their utmost
 atrocities, were founded on a perfect knowledge of human
 nature, and were those which in every age have been
 resorted to by the democratic tyrants of mankind. The
 first thing they did was to re-establish the Jacobin club,
 formerly presided over by Chalier. The most violent
 speeches were there immediately made, especially by
 Javoignes, a popular demagogue, who had succeeded to
 his influence. Chalier and Riard were represented as the
 martyrs of liberty, the heroes of the Republic, the only
 friends of the people. The workmen were told of the
 shameful slavery in which they had so long been kept by
 the rich ; of the fortunes which had been wrung from the
 sweat of their brows, and the penury which they them-
 selves had received as the reward of their toil. Javoignes
 invited them to resume their rights, by rending from the
 rich their ill-gotten gains ; and, when the decree of the

94.
Means taken
to rouse the
people.

riotes égorgés ou proscrits, les édifices spécialement employés à l'industrie, et les monumens consacrés à l'humanité et à l'instruction publique.

"III.—Le nom de Lyon sera effacé du tableau des villes de la République. La réunion des maisons conservées portera désormais le nom de Ville Affranchie.

"IV.—Il sera élevé sur les ruines de Lyon une colonne qui attestera à la postérité les crimes et la punition des Royalistes de cette ville, avec cette inscription—

'Lyon fit la guerre à la Liberté—

Lyon n'est plus.

Le 18^{me} jour du premier mois,

L'an deuxième de la République Française.'"

—*Moniteur*, 13 Oct. 1793.

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XIII.

1793.

¹ Prudhom.
Crimes de la
Révolution,
vi. 30, 31.

Convention confiscating the property of all the proprietors was promulgated, he had no difficulty in persuading them that the demolition of the houses was the first step in the division of their effects, and essential to the establishment of that sacred equality which was the only secure basis of real freedom.¹

95.
Commence-
ment of the
destruction
of Lyons.

Having worked the people up by these prospects of plunder to a sufficient degree of revolutionary energy, the commissioners of the Convention proceeded in a regular and systematic manner to carry its infernal decree into execution. Attended by a crowd of satellites, all in the most vehement state of excitement, Couthon traversed the finest quarters of the city with a silver hammer; he struck at the door of the devoted houses, exclaiming at the same time—"Rebellious house, I strike you in the name of the law!" Instantly the agents of destruction, of whom twenty thousand were in the pay of the Convention, surrounded the dwelling, and levelled it with the ground. The expense of these demolitions, which continued without interruption, for six months, was greater than it cost to raise the princely Hotel of the Invalides: it amounted to the enormous sum of £700,000. The workmen employed in the demolition received 400,000 francs (£16,000) every ten days.* The palaces thus destroyed were the finest private buildings in France, three stories in height, adorned with noble columns, and erected in the richest style of the structures of Louis XIV. Their construction had cost £12,000,000 sterling. To the honour of Couthon, however, it must be added, his hostility was chiefly directed against the buildings, that no great effusion of blood attended his government, and that he gave great numbers of suspected persons the means of making their escape into the country.²

² Lac. xi.
116, 117.
Abbé Guil-
lon, ii. 392.
Th. v. 317,
318, 356.
Prudhom.
vi. 63. Lam.
vii. 188.

* "Quatre cent mille livres (£16,000) se dépensent par décade pour les démolitions et quelques autres objets: mais l'indolence des démolisseurs démontre clairement que leurs bras ne sont pas propres à bâtir une République."—ACHARD à GRAVIER; *Lyon*, 28 Nivose, Ann. 2. *Papiers Inédits trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 232.

But this vengeance on inanimate stones was but a prelude to more bloody executions. Collot d'Herbois, the next proconsul, who, along with Fouché, succeeded to the government of Lyons after Couthon had been recalled, was animated with an envenomed feeling towards the inhabitants. Ten years before he had been hissed off their stage, and the vicissitudes of the Revolution had now placed resistless power in the hands of an indifferent provincial comedian; an emblem of the too frequent tendency of civil convulsions to elevate whatever is base, and sink whatever is noble among mankind.* The discarded actor resolved at leisure to gratify a revenge which had been cherished for so long a period. Innumerable benefits since conferred on him by the people of Lyons, and no small share of their favour, had not been able to

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96.

Collot
d'Her-
bois' and
Fouché's
infamous
proceedings.

* J. M. Collot d'Herbois had a sallow countenance, a profusion of dark hair and eyebrows; his whole aspect was that of a sanguinary conspirator. He had been a comic actor before the Revolution, and often appeared on the boards of Geneva and Lyons, in the latter of which towns he had been hissed off the stage. When the Revolution commenced, he quitted that humble vocation and entered the Jacobin Club at Paris, where his savage gestures, thundering voice, and impetuous declamation, almost always excited by the fumes of wine, soon brought him into notice. He was first brought into celebrity, however, by gaining the prize proposed by the Jacobin Club for an essay, in 1790, "On the advantages which the people would derive from the new order of things." It was won by his pamphlet entitled—"Almanach du Père Gérard." Subsequently he distinguished himself by the lead which he took in supporting, before the Assembly, the pardon of the mutineers of the regiment of Châteaueux, who had been subdued at Nancy by Bouillé, which that body, as might have been supposed, readily granted; and they were immediately received with civic honours, and presented to the Assembly, who decreed to them "les honneurs de la séance." Collot d'Herbois, in consequence of the lead which he took on this occasion, was made a member of the new municipality installed in power in Paris on the 10th August, which so rapidly consummated the crimes of the Revolution. He was one of the first who moved in the Assembly for the abolition of royalty, and was made a member of the Committee of Public Salvation. In the deliberations of that body, and subsequently in the Convention, he advocated the total and entire destruction of all suspected persons. "There must be no transportation," said he; "we must destroy all the conspirators; let the places where they are confined be mined; let the torches be fired to blow them into the air: it is thus alone we can get quit of the suspected." He gave such good proof of his disposition to put in practice these maxims on a mission to the Loiret and Oise, where he speedily filled the prisons with victims, that he was immediately fixed on by the Committee of Public Salvation, in November 1793, to wreak its vengeance on the unhappy inhabitants of Lyons.—See *Biographie Universelle*, ix. 277, 279.

extinguish this ancient grudge. This atrocious wretch had not a single good quality in his character. At once cowardly and cruel, spiteful and relentless, selfish and tyrannical, he united the whole vices of democratic fervour and despotic jealousy, without any of the virtues of either. His character would pass for incredible, if not clearly portrayed by his public acts and private correspondence.* Fouché (of Nantes†) afterwards so well known as minister of police under Napoleon, the worthy associate of Collot d'Herbois, published before his arrival a proclamation, in which he declared, "that the French people

* "We are accused," said Collot d'Herbois, "of being cannibals, men of blood; but it is in counter-revolutionary petitions, drawn by aristocrats, that the charge is made. A drop of blood poured from generous veins goes to my heart, but I have no pity for conspirators. We caused two hundred to be shot at once, and it is charged upon us as a crime! When twenty persons are guillotined in succession, the last dies twenty deaths. They speak of sensibility! The Jacobins are full of sensibility—they have all the virtues! They are compassionate, humane, and generous: but they reserve these sentiments for the patriots."—*Débats des Jacobins*, 20th Dec. 1793.

† Joseph Fouché, afterwards Duke of Otranto, was born at Nantes on the 29th May 1763, and proved one of the most remarkable men whom the Revolution brought forward. He was the son of a captain in the merchant service at Nantes, and received the rudiments of education at the college of that town. His talents, however, were slow in developing themselves, and he passed at school for a boy of no capacity. He never could be got to comprehend the rules of grammar, and rebelled constantly against the attention to words, which unhappily form almost the sole objects, in all countries, of elementary education. While he was deemed by all an incorrigible simpleton, he was secretly devouring works of thought and reflection: and what first attracted the notice of his preceptors was the discovery that he was studying the *Pensées de Pascal*. He was originally destined to the merchant service; but the delicacy of his constitution caused that design to be abandoned, and he went to Paris to complete his education, with a view to a learned profession. The theological works first put into his hands excited no attention in his mind; but he fastened with avidity on the Elements of Euclid, the Essays of Nicole, and the Petit Carême of Massillon. He underwent a distinguished mathematical examination at Arras, and afterwards at Vendôme: and his contemporaries at that period were unanimous in attesting to the regularity of his manners, and the kindness of his disposition. At the college of Arras he formed an intimacy with Robespierre, who was indebted to his friendship for the loan of some hundred francs to enable him to travel to Paris when he was first appointed deputy to the Constituent Assembly. At the age of twenty-five, his talents were so well known that he was appointed *Préfet des Etudes* at the college of Nantes; and he held that situation when the Revolution broke out in 1789.

Instantly he fastened with his whole heart and soul on the Revolutionary doctrines, and, as he had not yet received orders, he married, went to the bar, and soon became a leading member of the popular society at Nantes. Without

could acknowledge no other worship but that of universal morality ; no other faith but that of its own sovereignty ; that all religious emblems placed on the roads, in the houses, or on public places, should be destroyed ; that the mortcloth used at funerals should bear, instead of a religious emblem, a figure of Sleep, and that over the door of the cemetery should be written—*Death is an eternal sleep.*” The principles of these worthy successors of Chalier were, that all rebels, conspirators, and traitors, must be annihilated, if possible, at a single blow, and every vestige of the old regime destroyed.* A circular

eloquence, he signalised himself from the first by the unsparing use of that violence and exaggeration, in thought and language, which with the multitude is the surest passport to success. In September 1792, he was elected member of the Convention for the department of Loire Inférieure, and at first he took no decided part in that Assembly ; he lay by and watched the course of events. His intimacy with Robespierre was revived, but their characters were too dissimilar to enable them to act long together. Robespierre was a sincere and exalted fanatic, who deemed the sacrifice of hundreds of thousands the necessary prelude to general felicity. Fouché, cool and selfish, was led away by none of these delusions, but from the first set deliberately to work to make his fortune, *per fas aut nefas*, by the Revolution. He attached himself in preference to the party of Danton, the profound and selfish immorality of which was much more in accordance with his views and objects. From the moment of his arrival at Paris, he was a constant attendant at the Jacobin Club, and closely connected with Marat. At first he acted with Vergniaud and the Girondists ; but no sooner did the strife begin between them and the Jacobins, than, with his usual prophetic acuteness, he attached himself to the latter, as the party most likely to prevail in the contest. Still he shunned the extreme violence of their leaders, as likely to injure themselves ; and on one occasion, when Robespierre had vehemently assailed Vergniaud in the Convention, he said to him, “ Such violence will assuredly move the passions ; but it will neither induce confidence nor insure esteem.” He warmly supported all the extreme revolutionary measures, as the death of Louis, the sale of the emigrants’ estates, and the seizure of the property of hospitals and incorporations. His first public mission of importance was as commissioner of the Convention to Lyons in September 1793, where he signalised himself equally by his atheism, his cruelty, and his rapacity. His remarkable character will come to be drawn with more propriety in a future volume, after his extraordinary career has been recounted.—See chap. xc. § 43 ; and *Biographie Universelle*, lxiv. 293, 295. (FOUCHÉ.)

* “ Let us be terrible, that we incur not the risk of being feeble. Let us annihilate in our wrath, at a single blow, all rebels, all conspirators, all traitors, to spare ourselves the long agony of punishing like kings. Let us exercise justice after the example of nature : let our vengeance be that of the people : let us strike like the thunderbolt, and let even the ashes of our enemies disappear from the soil of liberty. Let the perfidious and ferocious English be attacked from every side. Let the whole Republic form a volcano to pour devouring lava upon them : may the infamous island which produced those

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addressed by Fouché and Collot d'Herbois to the clubs of Lyons, the day after their arrival, explains their principles : —“ Everything is permitted to those who support the Revolution. The thirst for a legitimate vengeance becomes an imperious necessity. Citizens, it is indispensable that all those who have directly or indirectly contributed to the rebellion should be sent to the scaffold. If you are patriots, you will know your friends : imprison all the others. Let no consideration arrest you—neither age, nor sex, nor relationship. Take by a forced tax all that any citizen has of superfluity ; every man who possesses what is beyond his necessities is sure to abuse it. There are many who have stores of clothes, linen, dresses, and shoes, seize them all—what right has a man to keep in his possession superfluous goods or clothing ? Let all the gold and silver that is found be poured into the national treasury. Extirpate every species of worship : the Republican has no other God than his country. All the Communes of the Republic will soon follow the example of that of Paris, which on the ruins of Gothic superstition has just raised the altar of Reason. Aid us to strike great blows, or we shall strike ourselves.”¹

¹ Prudhom.
vi.39. Moni-
teur, p. 18.
Oct. 18.
Guillon, ii.
333, 337.
Lac. xi. 117.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. vii.
186.

97.
First pro-
ceedings of
the Jacobins
at Lyons.

Proceeding on these atrocious principles, the first step of Collot d'Herbois and Fouché was to institute a fête in honour of Chalier, the Republican governor of Lyons, a man of the most execrable character, who had been put to death for innumerable crimes on the first insurrection against the rule of the Convention. The churches were accordingly closed, divine worship abolished, the decade established, and every vestige of religion extinguished. The bust of Chalier was then carried through the streets, followed by an immense crowd of assassins and prostitutes, exclaiming—“ A bas les aristocrates ! Vive la guillotine ! ” After them came an ass, bearing the gospel, the

monsters, who no longer belong to humanity, be for ever buried under the ocean. Adieu ! my friend ; *Tears of joy flow from my eyes : we send this evening two hundred and thirteen rebels to be shot.*”—FOUCHÉ to COLLOT D'HERBOIS. *Moniteur*, 25th Dec. 1793.

cross, the communion vases, and all the most sacred emblems of the Christian worship ; the procession came to the Place des Terreaux, where an altar was prepared amidst the ruins of that once splendid square. Fouché then exclaimed—"The blood of the wicked can alone appease thy manes ! We swear before thy sacred image to avenge thy death ; the blood of the aristocrats shall serve for its incense." At the same time a fire was lighted on the altar, and the crucifix and the gospel were committed to the flames ; the consecrated bread was trampled under the feet of the mob, and the ass compelled to drink out of the communion cup the consecrated wine. After this, the procession, singing indecent songs, traversed the streets, followed by an ambulatory guilotine.¹

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1793.

¹ Prudhom.
Crimes de la
Révolution,
vi. 34, 35.
Guillon, ii.
346, 348.
Lac. xi. 118.

The Convention, to expedite the work of destruction, sent a number of the most violent Jacobins from Paris, under the direction of Ronsin and Parrein—the one a starving advocate, and the other a popular orator from the Faubourg St Antoine. They commenced their operations by distributing large sums of money, remitted from the capital for that purpose, among the most violent of the Jacobins.* Under their direction, a Revolutionary tribunal, consisting of seven members, was established, with Parrein for its president. This commission soon gave proofs of its efficiency, by condemning daily eight or ten persons to death, who were executed immediately on leaving the court on a scaffold erected at its doors. A few questions constituted, in general, the whole trial of the accused :—"What is your name and profession ? What did you do during the siege ? Are you denounced ?" The slightest confusion, a gesture, a blush, a fit of trem-

98.
Proceedings
of the Revo-
lutionary
tribunal at
Lyons.

* "J'ai reçu plusieurs fois de tes nouvelles, et notamment la somme de quatorze cents livres en assignats ; j'en ferai le plus digne emploi—celui de soutenir avec courage les principes d'une société républicaine. Nous sommes une vingtaine de bons bougres qui ont pris cette résolution, et elle sera constante."—ACHARD à GRAVIER ; *Lyon*, 15 Ventose, Ann. 2. *Papiers Inédits trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 235.

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bling, a sudden paleness at answering these questions, were sufficient, without any witnesses, to send the accused to the guillotine. Yet, even in these terrible moments, the heroism of the persons brought before the tribunal was often such, that the judges had no small difficulty in finding a pretext for their condemnation. Marie Adrian, a girl of sixteen, had served a cannon during the siege. "How could you," said the president, "brave the fire, and point the gun against your country?" "I did so to defend it," replied the young heroine. She was instantly condemned. Another girl of seventeen was brought before the tribunal, because she would not wear the tricolor cockade. "It is not," said she, "that I hate the cockade; but, as you bear it, it would dishonour my forehead." She persisted in her refusal, and was sent to the scaffold. "Do you believe in God?" said they to a priest. "A little," replied he, hoping to soften their fury. "Die, and you will discover," was the answer, and he was condemned on the spot. Two brothers of the name of Bruyset were imprisoned, both of the very highest character. The elder had signed some bills to raise funds during the siege for the defence, and the younger was brought to trial by mistake for his brother. They showed him the bill, and asked him if he knew the signature, and if so, if it was his own. "The signature," said he, "is that of Bruyset!" On this generous answer he was sent to death, instead of his brother, who had really signed the instrument. He died cheerfully, recommending his wife and children to the relative whom he had saved.¹

¹ Prudhom.
vi. 42, 47.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. vii.
189.

99.
Mournful
inscriptions
on the walls
of the pri-
sons.

The vast accumulation of prisoners soon exceeded all the means of confinement which Lyons could afford. Their numbers, before many weeks had elapsed, amounted to six thousand. Great numbers of the captives were in consequence shut up in two large vaults, formerly used for storing wine, called *La Mauvaise* and *La Bonne Cave*. Those confined in the former were such as were destined for immediate and certain death; in the latter, those who

had any chance of escape. This distinction was so well known, that the prisoners sent to the former knew that they had only a few hours to live, and its gloomy walls exhibited inscriptions indicating the feelings which filled the breasts of its inmates. In one place, near a small aperture which admitted a ray of light, was written, "In a hundred and thirty minutes I shall have ceased to exist ; I shall have tasted of death : blessed be the stroke, it is the mother of repose." Near the door were inscribed these words — "Barbarous judges ! you deceived yourselves in sending me to death ; the end of my days is the end of my woes : you are my best friends." In another place were found the words—"In a few minutes I shall be in nonentity : I am wearied of the world : oh, for the sleep of death !" Unable to bear the suspense even of a few hours before their last hour approached, numbers attempted to destroy themselves, and some actually succeeded. One had, with a piece of bottle-glass which he found on the floor, opened veins in every part of the body, and he was bleeding from thirty wounds when the Revolutionary Tribunal caused him to be brought out, deadly pale, and weltering in his blood on his mattress, and placed under the guillotine.¹

¹ Prudhom.
vi. 46, 48,
54. Lam.
Hist. des
Gir.vii.192.

The Revolutionary Tribunal, established under such auspices, was not slow in consummating the work of destruction ; but, rapid as they were, they were far from coming up to the expectations and desires of the commissioners of the Convention. The scaffold opposite the Hôtel de Ville, where the trials were conducted, was kept in ceaseless employment. Around its bloody foundations large quantities of water were daily poured ; but they were inadequate to wash away the ensanguined stains, or remove the fetid odour. So noxious did they become, that Dorfeuille, the functionary intrusted with the executions, was obliged to remove it to another situation ; where it was placed directly above an open sewer, ten feet deep, which bore the gore away to the Rhone. The

100.
Dreadful
measures of
the Revolution-
ary Tri-
bunal.

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washerwomen there were obliged to change their station, from the quantity of blood which became mingled with its waters. At length, when the executions had risen to thirty or forty a day, the guillotine was placed in the middle of the bridge at Morand in the centre of the Rhone, into which the stream of blood at once fell, and into which the headless trunks and severed heads were precipitated. Yet even this terrible slaughter, which went on without intermission for three months, appeared insufficient to the Jacobins.* “Convinced, as we are,” said Fouché, “that there is not an innocent soul in the whole city, except such as were loaded with chains by the enemies of the people, we are steeled against every sentiment of mercy ; we are resolved that the blood of the patriots shall be revenged in a manner at once prompt and terrible. The degree of the Convention for the destruction of Lyons has been passed, but hardly anything has been done for its execution. The work of demolition goes on too slowly ; more rapid destruction is required by Republican impatience. The explosion of the mine, or the ravages of fire, can alone express its omnipotence ; its will can admit of no control, like the mandates of tyrants ; it should resemble the lightning of heaven. We must annihilate at once the enemies of the Republic ; that mode of revenging the outraged sovereignty of the people will be infinitely more appalling than the trifling and insufficient work of the guillotine. Often twenty wretches on the same day have undergone punishment, but my impatience is insatiable till all the conspirators have disappeared ; popular vengeance calls for the destruction of our whole enemies at one blow ; we are preparing the thunder.”^{1†} In pur-

¹ Lam. Hist. des Gir. vii. 190. Guillon, ii. 402, 405. Moniteur, Nov. 24. Th. v. 356.

* “Le Tribunal Révolutionnaire poursuit avantageusement sa carrière ; il aurait certainement besoin de bons renseignemens : mais il ne se donne pas la peine de les rechercher ou d’en demander à ceux en qui il peut se confier : néanmoins hier 17 mirent la tête à la guillotine, et aujourd’hui 8 y passent et 21 reçoivent le feu de la foudre.”—ACHARD à GRAVIER, *juré du Tribunal Révolutionnaire* ; Lyon, 28 Nivôse, Ann. 2. *Papiers trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 231.

† FOUCHÉ au Comité du Salut Public. *Papiers trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 207 ; *Moniteur*, 24th Nov. 1793.

suance of these principles, orders were given to the Revolutionary Tribunal to redouble its exertions. "We are dying of fatigue," said the judges and the executioner to Collot d'Herbois. "Republicans," replied he, "the amount of your labours is nothing to mine; burn with the same ardour as I have for your country, and you will soon recover your strength."*

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Deeming the daily execution of thirty or forty persons too tardy a display of Republican vengeance, Collot d'Herbois prepared a new and simultaneous mode of punishment. Sixty-four captives, of both sexes, were led out at once, tightly bound together, to the Place des Brotteaux; they were arranged in two files, with a deep ditch on each side, which was to be their place of sepulchre, while gendarmes, with uplifted sabres, threatened with instant death whoever moved from the position in which he stood. At the extremity of the file, two cannon loaded with grape were so placed as to enfilade the line, the whole civil and military authorities of Lyons were stationed on eminences on either side, while Fouché and Collot d'Herbois, from the balcony of the Hotel on the quay opposite, with their telescopes in their hand directed to the spot, were prepared to enjoy the spectacle. But the ferocity of their persecutors was disappointed by the heroism which most of these victims displayed in their last moments. Seated on the fatal chariots, they embraced each other with transports of enthusiasm, exclaiming—

101.
Mitrailade
of the pri-
soners.

"Mourir pour la patrie
Est le sort le plus doux,
Le plus digne d'envie."

* "Tous les jours il en passe, tant fusillés que guillotins, au moins une cinquantaine."—PELOT au Citoyen GRAVIER; *Ville Affranchie*, 28 Frimaire, Ann. 2.

"Ma santé se rétablit chaque jour par l'effet de la destruction des ennemis de notre commune patrie. Mon ami, je t'assure que cela va on ne peut mieux: tous les jours il s'en expédie une douzaine; on vient même de trouver cet expédient trop long. *Tu apprendras sous peu de jours des expéditions de deux ou trois cents à la fois*; les maisons se démolissent à force."—PELOT à GRAVIER; 13 Frimaire, Ann. 2. *Papiers trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 209.

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Many women watched for the hour when their husbands were to pass to execution, precipitated themselves upon the chariot, locked them in their arms, and voluntarily suffered death by their side. Daughters surrendered their honour to save their parents' lives ; but the monsters who violated them, adding treachery to crime, led them out to behold the execution of the objects for whom they had submitted to sacrifices worse than death itself. The wretched victims beheld with firmness the awful preparations, and continued singing the patriotic hymns of the Lyonnese, till the signal was given, and the guns were discharged. Few were so fortunate as to obtain death at the first fire ; the greater part were merely mutilated, and fell uttering piercing cries, and beseeching the soldiers to put a period to their sufferings. A frightful shriek, arising from that field of agony, arose into the air, and was heard across the Rhone in all the neighbouring quarters of Lyons. Broken limbs, torn off by the shot, were scattered in every direction, while the blood flowed in torrents into the ditches on either side of the line. A second and a third discharge were insufficient to complete the work of destruction, till at length the gendarmerie, unable to witness such protracted sufferings, rushed in and despatched the survivors with their sabres. It took two fearful hours, however, to complete the massacre ; for the soldiers, unused to murder, were unskilful in the work of destruction. The bodies, when it was at length accomplished, were collected and thrown into the Rhone.¹

¹ Lam. Hist. des Gir. vii. 196, 198. Guillon, ii. 417. Lac. xi. 118, 121. Prudhom. vi. 50, 51.

102.
Vast numbers who thus perished.

On the following day this bloody scene was renewed on a still greater scale. Two hundred and nine captives, drawn from the prison of Roanne, were brought before the Revolutionary judges at the Hôtel de Ville, and, after merely interrogating them as to their names and professions, the lieutenant of the gendarmerie read a sentence condemning them all to be executed together. In vain several exclaimed that they had been mistaken for others, that they were not the persons condemned.

With such precipitance was the affair conducted, that two commissaries of the prison were led out along with their captives ; their cries, their exclamations, were alike disregarded. In passing the Morand bridge, the error was discovered, upon the prisoners being counted : it was intimated to Collot d'Herbois that there were two too many. "What signifies it," said he, "that there are two too many ? If they die to-day, they cannot die to-morrow." The whole were brought to the place of execution, a meadow near the granary of Part Dieu, where they were attached to one cord, made fast to trees at stated intervals, with their hands tied behind their backs, and numerous pickets of soldiers disposed so as by one discharge to destroy them all. At a signal given, the fusillade commenced ; but few were killed ; the greater part had only a jaw or a limb broken, and, uttering the most piercing cries, broke loose in their agony from the rope, and were cut down by the gendarmerie in endeavouring to escape. The numbers who survived the discharge rendered the work of destruction a most laborious operation, and several were still breathing on the following day, when their bodies were mingled with quick-lime, and cast into a common grave. Collot d'Herbois and Fouché were witnesses of this butchery from a distance, by means of telescopes which they directed to the spot. The latter

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¹ Prudhom.
vi. 51, 53.
Guillon, ii.
427. Lac.
xi. 121.

All the other fusillades, of which there were several,

* "Et nous aussi, nous combattons les ennemis de la République à Toulon en offrant à leurs regards des milliers de cadavres de leurs complices. Anéantissons d'un seul coup dans notre colère tous les rebelles, tous les conspirateurs, tous les traîtres ! Frappons comme la tonnerre, et que la cendre même de nos ennemis disparaisse du sol de la liberté. Que la République ne soit qu'un volcan !—Adieu ! mon ami ! *Des larmes de joie coulent de mes yeux, elles inondent mon âme !*—Nous n'avons qu'une manière de célébrer nos victoires ; nous envoyons ce soir deux cent treize rebelles sous le feu de la foudre."—FOUCHÉ à COLLOT D'HERBOIS, NOV. 8. 1793. LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, vii. 212.

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103.Butcheries
witnessed
by Fouché.

were conducted in the same manner.* The flower of the population of Lyons and the adjoining departments were cut off in these atrocious massacres. One of them was executed under the windows of a hotel on the Quay, where Fouché, with thirty Jacobins and twenty courtesans, were engaged at dinner. They rose from table to enjoy the spectacle. Many persons became insane from such an accumulation of horrors, and were executed raving mad. One man of the name of Lawrence, who had his pardon in his pocket, was seized with such a sudden fit of insanity that he could make no use of it, and was hurried away to the scaffold in a swoon, when the pardon dropped out of his pocket. He was taken to the Hotel de Ville, where he was restored to animation. "Am I yet alive?" cried he. "Give me back my head: Do you not see that stream of blood? it is over my ankles: I am falling into that gulf of dead bodies: Save me, save me!" The bodies of the slain were floated in such numbers down the Rhone, that the waters were poisoned, and the danger of contagion at length obliged Collot d'Herbois to commit them to the earth. During the course of five months, upwards of six thousand persons suffered death by the hands of the executioners, and more than double that number were driven into exile. Among those who perished on the scaffold, were all the noblest and most virtuous characters of Lyons, all who were distinguished either for generosity, talent, or accomplishment. The delight which these frightful massacres gave to the Revolutionists could not be credited, if not proved by the decisive evidence of their secret correspondence with Robespierre.¹† The engineer Morand, who had recently constructed the celebrated bridge over the Rhone

¹ Prudhom.
vi. 56. Lac.
xi. 121. 122.
Guillon, ii.
317, 427.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. vii.
193, 194.

* "La guillotine, la fusillade, ne va pas mal: soixante, quatre-vingts, deux cents, à la fois; et tous les jours on a le plus grand soin d'en mettre de suite en état d'arrestation, pour ne pas laisser de vide aux prisons."—PELOT au Citoyen GRAVIER, juré national; 24 Frimaire, Ann. 2. *Papiers Inédits trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 211.

† "Encore des têtes, et chaque jour des têtes tombent. Quelles délices tu

which bore his name, was among the first to suffer, and he was succeeded by a generous merchant, whose only crime consisted in having declared that he would give 500,000 francs to rebuild the Hotel Dieu, the noblest monument of charity in Lyons.

These dreadful atrocities excited no feeling of indignation in the Convention. With disgraceful animosity, they were envious of any city which promised to interfere with the despotism of the Parisian populace, and were secretly rejoiced at an excuse for destroying the wealth, spirit, and intelligence which had sprung up with the commercial prosperity of Lyons. "The arts and commerce," said Hébert, "are the greatest enemies of freedom. Paris should be the centre of political authority : no community should be suffered to exist which can pretend to rival the capital." Barère announced the executions to the Convention in the following words :—"The corpses of the rebellious Lyonnese, floated down the Rhone, will teach the perfidious citizens of Toulon the fate which awaits them." So little were the Jacobins of Lyons ashamed of their proceedings, that they got gold ornaments wrought into the form of guillotines out of the spoil which they amassed, which were ostentatiously worn by the dissolute females whose society they frequented. One might be led to despair of the fortunes of the species from the recital of such scenes, were not the dignity of human nature asserted by the conduct of many of the prisoners. A child, the son of M. de Rochefort, was led out, with his father and three of his relations, to be shot. The youth and innocence of the victim softened the hearts of the spectators and soldiers, and, when the fire took place, all fell but the child, who was spared, and his life promised. "I wish death," said he, embracing the lifeless

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104.
Heroism
exhibited
by the suf-
ferers.

aurais goûtées si tu eusses vu avant-hier cette justice nationale de 209 scélérats ! Quelle majesté ! Quel ton imposant ! Tout va bien. Combien de grands coquins ont ce jour-là mordu la poussière dans l'arène des Brotteaux ! Quel ciment pour la République !"—ACHARD à GRAVIER ; Lyon, 17 Frimaire, Ann. 2. Papiers Inédits trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE, ii. 233.

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body of his parent. "I am a Royalist : Vive le Roi ;" and he fell, pierced by seven balls. A young woman who had seen her parents, brothers, and betrothed, cut down the day before in one of the mitrallades, exclaimed, when brought before the judge, "You have killed my father, my brothers, my betrothed. I have no one left in the world to love. My religion forbids me to terminate my existence : put me to death." She was instantly condemned. A young man who had been condemned to be shot with his father, an old man of eighty years of age, found means during the night to escape by a sewer which communicated from the Hôtel de Ville to the river. Having made sure of the issue, he returned to bring his aged parent with him. The old man sank from fatigue in the middle of the passage, and entreated his son to escape and leave him to his fate. "No," said the youth, "we will live or die together :" with these words, he put the old man on his shoulders, and had the good fortune to escape with him. A young woman in the last stage of pregnancy, who had combated as a soldier during the siege, exclaimed, when seated on the fatal chariot, "I regret not life, I regret only the infant I bear in my bosom. The monsters ! they would not wait a few days lest I should give birth to an avenger of freedom." A cry for mercy arose in the crowd ; but it was soon stifled by the fall of the guillotine. The unheard-of atrocities were faithfully reported to Robespierre and the Committee of Public Salvation ; but they produced no change in their sanguinary policy.¹*

¹ Lam. Hist. des Gir. vii. 199, 206, 208. Lac. xi. 121. Abbé Guillon, ii. 307, 308. Toul. iv. 81.

The troops engaged in the siege of Lyons were immediately moved towards Toulon ; twelve battalions of the army of Italy were destined to the same service,

* "Nos campagnes sont dans la stupeur. Le laboureur sème avec la certitude de ne point moissonner. Le riche cache son or et n'ose faire travailler l'indigent. Tout commerce est suspendu. Les femmes, étouffant l'instinct de la Nature, maudissent le jour où elles sont devenues mères. Le mourant appelle son pasteur pour entendre de sa bouche une parole de consolation et d'espérance ; et le pasteur est menacé de la guillotine s'il va consoler son frère. Les églises sont dévastées, les autels renversés par des brigands qui prétendent marcher au nom de la loi, tandis qu'ils ne marchent que par les ordres de

and soon forty thousand men were assembled under its walls. It presented, nevertheless, great difficulties to be overcome; the more especially as the English government had sent a body of troops from Gibraltar to co-operate in its defence, and a considerable force of Spaniards, Piedmontese, and Neapolitans, had arrived to aid in defending so important a stronghold from the Republican forces. On the land side Toulon is backed by a ridge of lofty hills, on which, for above a century past, fortifications had stood. Though formidable to the attacking force, however, these fortified posts were not less dangerous to the besieged, if once they fell into the hands of the enemy, for the greater part of the city and harbour could be reached by their guns. The Mount Faron and the Hauteur de Grasse are the principal points of this rocky range; on their possession depends the maintenance of the place. Shortly after their disembarkation, the English made themselves masters of the defile of Olioulles—a rocky pass of great strength, well known to travellers for its savage character, which forms the sole communication between the promontory of Toulon and the mainland of France. An English detachment of six hundred men had driven the Republican posts from this important point; but the defence having been unwisely intrusted to a Spanish force, Carteaux assailed it in the beginning of September with above five thousand men, and, after a slight resistance, regained the pass. Its occupation being deemed too great a division of the garrison of the town, already much weakened by the defence of the numerous fortified posts in the vicinity of the harbour, no attempt was made

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105.

Description
of Toulon,
and Allies
assembled
for its de-
fence.

brigands comme eux. Grand Dieu ! à quels temps sommes-nous arrivés. Tous les bons citoyens, ou presque tous, benissaient la Révolution, et tous la maudissent, et regrettent la tyrannie. La crise est telle, que nous sommes à la veille des plus grands malheurs. Les éclats de la bombe que l'on charge dans ces contrées extermineront peut-être la Convention tout entière si tu ne te hâtes de l'éteindre ! Médite, Robespierre, ces vérités que j'ose signer, dussé-je périr pour les avoir écrites !" GILLET à ROBESPIERRE, 8 Nov. 1793.
LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, vii. 214.

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to regain the lost ground, and the Republican videttes were pushed up to the external works of Toulon. His recompense for this important service was, that he was deprived of his command by the Convention, and Dugommier invested with the direction of the besieging force. Every exertion was made by the allied troops and the inhabitants of Toulon, during the respite afforded by the siege of Lyons, to strengthen the defences of the town ; but the regular force was too small, and composed of too heterogeneous materials, to inspire any well-grounded confidence in their means of resistance. The English troops did not exceed five thousand men, and little reliance could be placed on the motley crowd of eight thousand Spanish, Piedmontese, and Neapolitan soldiers, who composed the remainder of the garrison. The hopes of the inhabitants were principally rested on powerful reinforcements from England and Austria ; but their expectations from both these powers, as usual at that period with all who trusted to British succour, were miserably disappointed. They made the utmost efforts, however, to strengthen the defences of the place, and in particular endeavoured to render impregnable the Fort Eguillette, placed at the extremity of the promontory which shuts in the lesser harbour, and which, from its similarity to the position of the great fortress of the same name, they called the Little Gibraltar.¹

¹ Personal observation. Th. vi. 52. Ann. Reg. xxxiii. 415. Toul. iv. 81.

106.
Bonaparte obtains the command of the artillery.

In the beginning of September, Lord Mulgrave arrived, and assumed the command of the whole garrison. The most active operations were immediately commenced for strengthening the outworks on the mountain-range behind the city. The heights of Malbousquet, of Cape Brun, and of Eguillette, were soon covered with works traced out by the French engineers. No sooner had General Dugommier taken the command, and the whole besieging army assembled, than it was resolved to commence an attack on the hill forts which covered the harbour ; and for this purpose, while a false attack was directed against

Cape Brun, the principal effort was to be made for the possession of the mountain of Faron, and the Fort Malbousquet. With this view the breaching batteries were placed under the direction of a young officer of artillery, then chief of battalion, destined to surpass all his predecessors in European history, NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE. Under his able superintendence, the works of the fort soon began to be seriously damaged ; and, to interrupt the operations, a sally was resolved upon from the garrison.¹

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¹ Jom. iv.
219, 220.
Ann. Reg.
xxxiii. 415.

On the 30th November the sally was made by three thousand men from the town, to destroy the works on the heights of Arrennes, from which this annoyance was experienced ; while another column, of nearly the same strength, proceeding in the opposite direction, was destined to force the batteries at the gorge of Olioulles, and destroy the great park of artillery placed there. Both attacks were at first crowned with some success. The batteries were carried, and the park on the point of being taken, when Dugommier, after haranguing the troops, led them back to the charge, and succeeded in repulsing the assailants. On the side of Arrennes, the sally was at first equally fortunate—all the enemy's works were carried, and their guns spiked ; but the impetuosity of the detachment having led them too far in pursuit of the enemy, they were in their turn attacked by fresh troops, headed by NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE, who here commenced his career of victory, and driven back to the city with considerable loss. In this affair General O'Hara, who had recently arrived from England, was wounded, and Dugommier was twice struck by spent balls, though without experiencing any serious injury.²

107.
Progress of
the siege.
First action
of Buonaparte.² Marmont,
Mem. i. 40,
41. Ann.
Reg. 414.
Jom. iv. 220.
Toul. iv. 85.
Th. vi. 55,
56. Nap. i.
13, 15.

The whole force of the besiegers was now directed against the English redoubt, erected in the centre of the works on the neck of land called Eguillette, and regarded as the key of the defence on that quarter. After battering the forts for a considerable time, the fire of the

108.
Capture of
Fort Eguillette and the
exterior
forts.

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Republicans became quite incessant during the whole of the 16th of December; and, at two o'clock on the morning of the 17th, they advanced to the assault. They were received with a tremendous discharge of grape and musketry from the works, and soon the ditch was filled with the dead and dying. The column was driven back, and Dugommier, who headed it, gave all over for lost; but fresh troops, continually advancing with great intrepidity, at length overpowered the Spanish soldiers, to whom a part of the line was intrusted, and surrounded the British detachment, nearly three hundred of whom fell while gallantly defending their part of the intrenchments. The possession of this fort by the enemy rendered the further maintenance of the exterior defences impracticable; and in the night the whole allied troops were withdrawn from the promontory to the city of Toulon. Bounaparte had strongly recommended this measure, as the possession of this fort, which commanded the inner harbour, would render the situation of the fleet extremely perilous, and in all probability lead to the evacuation of the city. While this important success was gained on the side of Fort Eguillette, the Republicans were not less fortunate on the other extremity of the line. A little before daybreak, and shortly after the firing had ceased on the promontory, a general attack was made by the enemy on the whole extensive range of posts which crowned Mount Faron. On the eastern side the Republicans were repulsed; but on the north, where the mountain was nearly eighteen hundred feet in height, steep, rocky, and apparently inaccessible, they succeeded in making good their ascent through paths deemed impracticable. Hardly were the Allies beginning to congratulate themselves on the defeat of what they deemed the main attack, when they beheld the heights above them crowded with glittering battalions, and the tricolor flag displayed from the loftiest summit of the mountain.¹

¹ Marmont
i. 42, 43.
Jom. iv.
223. Toul.
iv. 87, 88.
Ann. Reg.
415. Th. vi.
56, 57. Nap.
i. 14, 22, 23.

These conquests, which were projected by the genius

of Buonaparte, were decisive of the fate of the place. The garrison, it is true, still consisted of above ten thousand men, and the works of the town itself were as yet uninjured; but the harbour was untenable, as the shot from the heights of Faron and Fort Eguillette ranged over its whole extent. Sir Samuel Hood alone warmly insisted upon the propriety of an immediate effort to regain the outworks which had been lost: his advice was overruled by all the other officers, and it was resolved to evacuate the place. Measures were immediately taken to carry this determination into effect. The exterior forts, which still remained in the hands of the Allies, were all abandoned; and information was conveyed to the principal inhabitants that the means of retreat would be afforded them on board the British squadron, while the fleet was moved to the outer roads, beyond the reach of the enemy's fire. But much confusion necessarily ensued with a garrison composed of so many different nations; and the Neapolitans, in particular, fled from their posts, and got on board their ships with so much precipitation, that they incurred the derision of the whole garrison.¹

Terrible were the feelings with which the unfortunate inhabitants regarded the hasty evacuation of their city. To them it was the harbinger of confiscation, exile, and death,—Republican conquest, and the reign of the guillotine. With anxious eyes they watched the embarkation of the British sick and wounded on the morning of the 18th; and when the fatal truth could no longer be concealed, that they were about to be abandoned, despair and anguish wrung every heart. The streets were soon in the most frightful state of confusion; in many, the Jacobins, and galley-slaves who had broken loose, were already firing on the flying groups of women and children who were hurrying to the quay; and the sides of the harbour were soon filled with a piteous crowd, entreating, in the name of everything that was sacred, to be saved from their implacable enemies.² No

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109.

Evacuation
of the place.

¹ Marmont, Mem. i. 43, 45. Ann. Reg. xxxiii. p. 416, 417. Jom. iv. 224. Th. vi. 57. Toul. iv. 88. James, i. 110, 115. Nap. i. 14.

110.
Despair of
the inhabi-
tants.

² Ann. Reg. xxxiii. p. 416, 418. Th. vi. 59. James's Naval Hist. i. 115.

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time was lost in taking the unfortunate fugitives on board the vessels appointed for that purpose; an operation of no small labour and difficulty, for their numbers exceeded fourteen thousand.

111.
Burning of
the arsenal
and fleet.

It was resolved in the council, that such part of the French fleet as could be got ready for sea, should be sent out under the Royalist Admiral Trogoffe, and that the remainder, with all the stores, should be destroyed. This was a service of great danger, for the Republicans were fast pressing on the retreating forces of the besieged, and their shot already began to plunge into the harbour. Sir SIDNEY SMITH,* who here first appeared in arms against Buonaparte, whose destiny he was hereafter so materially to affect, volunteered to conduct the perilous enterprise, and at midnight proceeded to the arsenal to commence the work of destruction. He found the galley-slaves, to the number of six hundred, the greater part of whom were unfettered, inclined to dispute his entrance into the dockyard: but, by disposing a British sloop so that its guns enfiladed the quay, he was able to overawe them, and at the same time restrain the Jacobins, who, in great numbers, and with loud shouts, were assembling round its outer palisades. At eight, a fireship was towed into the harbour; at ten, the torches were applied, and the flames arose in every quarter. Notwithstanding the calmness of the night, the fire spread with rapidity, and soon reached the fleet, where, in a short time, fifteen ships of the line and eight frigates were blown up or burnt to the water's edge. The volumes of smoke which filled the sky, the flames which burst, as it were, out of the sea, and ascended to the heavens, the red light which illuminated even the most distant mountains, formed, says Buonaparte, a sublime and unique spectacle. About midnight, the *Iris* frigate, with several thousand barrels of powder, blew up with a terrific explosion, and shortly after the *Montreal*, fireship, experienced the same fate.¹

¹ Marmont
i. 44, 47.
Ann. Reg.
xxxiii. 418.
Jom. iv. 226.
James, i.
117. Th.
vi. 58, 59.
Nap. i. 25,
26.

* See a biography of Sir SIDNEY SMITH, *infra*, chap. xxvi. § 82.

The burning embers, falling in every direction, and the awful violence of the shocks, quelled for a moment the shouts of the Republican soldiers, who now crowded to the harbour's edge, and beheld, with indignant fury, the restless progress of the conflagration.

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No words can do justice to the horrors of the scene which ensued, when the last columns of the allied troops commenced their embarkation. Cries, screams, and lamentations, arose in every quarter; the frantic clamour, heard even across the harbour, announced to the soldiers in the Republican camp that the last hope of the Royalists was giving way. The sad remnant of those who had favoured the royal cause, and who had neglected to go off in the first embarkation, came flying to the beach, and invoked, with tears and prayers, the aid of their British friends. Mothers, clasping their babes to their bosoms, helpless children and decrepid old men, might be seen stretching their hands towards the harbour, shuddering at every sound behind them, and even rushing into the waves to escape the less merciful death which awaited them from their countrymen. Some had the generosity to throw themselves into the sea, to save, by their self-sacrifice, the lives of their parents, in danger of being swamped in the boats. Vast numbers perished from falling into the water, or by the swamping of boats, into which multitudes crowded, loaded with their most valuable effects, or bearing their parents or children on their shoulders. Such as could seize upon boats rushed into them with frantic vehemence, pushed from the beach without oars, and directed their unsteady and dangerous course towards their former protectors. The scene resembled those mournful catastrophes recorded by the historians of antiquity, when the inhabitants of whole cities in Asia Minor or Greece fled to the sea at the approach of their enemies, and steered away by the light of their burning habitations.¹ Sir Sidney Smith, with a degree of humanity worthy of his high character, suspended his

112.
Horrors of
the evacuation.

¹ Lam. Hist. des Gir. vii. 222. Joubert's Memoirs, p. 75. Ann. Reg. 418. Fonville, 84, 87, 112. Prudhom. vi. 149, 161.

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retreat till not a single individual who claimed his assistance remained on the strand, though the total number borne away amounted to fourteen thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven.

113.
Total loss
in ships to
the French.

The lukewarmness or timidity of the Spanish officers, to whom the destruction of the vessels in the basin before the town had been intrusted, preserved them from destruction, and saved a remnant, consisting of seven ships of the line and eleven frigates, to the Republic. These, with five ships of the line, sent round to Rochefort at the commencement of the siege, were all that remained of thirty-one ships of the line, and twenty-five frigates, which were lying in Toulon at the time it fell into the hands of the Allies. Three ships of the line and three frigates were brought away untouched, and taken into the English service; the total number captured or destroyed was eighteen ships of the line, nine frigates, and eleven corvettes. The French soldiers beheld with indescribable anguish the destruction of their fleet: all thinking men then foresaw that the war, lighted up between the rival states, could not be extinguished but by the destruction of one of them.¹

¹ Jom. iv.
225, 226.
James, i.
117. Th.
vi. 60. Ann.
Reg. xxxiii.
420.

114.
Dreadful
cruelty of
the Republicans.

The storm which now burst on the heads of the unfortunate Toulonese was truly dreadful. The infuriated soldiers rushed through the gates, and, in their rage, massacred two hundred Jacobins, who had come out to welcome their approach. For twenty-four hours the town was given up to pillage, and such as remained of the wretched inhabitants were a prey to the brutality of the soldiers, and of the galley-slaves, who were let loose upon the town. A stop was only put to these horrors by the citizens redeeming themselves for the enormous sum of 4,000,000 francs, or £160,000. To the honour of Dugommier, it must be added that he did his utmost, both to check the violence of his soldiers, and to mitigate the severity of the Convention towards the captives;² but he could not arrest the cruelty of

² Jom. iv.
226. Ann.
Reg. xxxiii.
421. James,
i. 116, 117.
Prudhom.
Crimes de
Ja Rev. vi.
146, 149.

the government commissioners. A vast multitude of citizens, to the number of several thousands, of every age and sex, perished in a few weeks by the sword or the guillotine; two hundred were daily beheaded for a considerable time; and twelve thousand labourers were hired from the surrounding departments, to demolish the buildings of the city.*

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On the motion of Barère, it was decreed that the name of Toulon should be changed to that of Port de la Montagne, that the houses should be razed to the foundations, and nothing left but the naval and military establishments. Barras, Fréron, and Robespierre the younger, were chosen to execute the vengeance of the Revolution on the fallen city. Military commissions were immediately formed, the prisons filled, a Revolutionary Tribunal established, and the guillotine put in permanent activity. The inhuman mitraillades of Lyons were imitated with fearful effect; before many days had expired, eight hundred persons had been thus cut off; a prodigious proportion out of a population not now exceeding ten thousand souls. One of the victims was an old merchant of the name of Hughes, eighty-four years of age, deaf, and almost blind. His only crime was the possession of a fortune of £800,000. He offered all his wealth but 500,000 livres to save his life; the judge, deeming that offer inadequate, sent him to the scaffold, and confiscated the whole. "When I beheld this old man executed," said Napoleon, "I felt as if the end of the world was at hand."¹ Among those struck down in one of the fusillades was a grey-haired man, severely but not mortally wounded. The executioners, conceiving him dead, retired from the scene of carnage: the persons who succeeded them to strip the dead, passed him by, through accident, in the darkness of the night, and he had strength enough

115.
Atrocious
decree of the
Convention
against
Toulon.

¹ Las Cases,
i. 166.

* "Tout va bien; j'ai requis douze mille maçons, pour démolir et raser la ville: tous les jours je fais tomber deux cents têtes: et déjà huit cents Toulonnais ont été fusillés."—FRÉRON *au Comité du Salut Public*. 24 Decembre 1793.—PRUDHOMME, vi. 118.

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¹ Ann. Reg.
xxxiii. 421.
Lac. xi. 189.
Prudhom.
vi. 157.

110.
Promiscu-
ous massa-
cre in the
Champ de
Mars.

left to raise himself from the ground, and move from the spot. His foot struck against a body, which gave a groan, and, stooping down, he discovered that it was his own son! After the first transports of joy were over, they crept along the ground, and, favoured by the darkness of the night and the inebriety of the guards, had the good fortune to escape, and lived to recount a tale which would have passed for fiction, if experience had not proved, in innumerable instances, that the horrors and vicissitudes of a revolution exceed anything which the imagination of romance can conceive.¹

Regarding these fusillades as too slow a method of gratifying their vengeance, Fréron and the commissioners of the Convention issued a general order that all who had taken part in the rebellion, or accepted office under Louis XVIII., should repair to the Champ de Mars under pain of death. Deeming prompt obedience the only chance of escaping the denounced penalty, eight thousand persons assembled at the hour appointed in that place. Fréron, Salicetti, Robespierre the younger, and Barras, were there supported by a large body of troops and a formidable array of artillery; but they were startled at the magnitude of the crowd, and, after a short consultation, delegated the work of destruction to three hundred Jacobin prisoners who had been confined, during the siege, on board the *Thémistocle*. These infuriate partisans were instantly let loose on the crowd, and seized on their victims as chance, hatred, or caprice, might decide. The persons selected were ranged along a wall opposite to the guns. Among them was an old man of seventy-six, who protested he was too feeble to have aided the besieged—"March on," was the answer, and soon a frightful discharge of grape-shot mowed down the greater part of the crowd. A voice then exclaimed—"Let all those who are not dead raise themselves up." No sooner did a few do so than a second discharge cut them off also. This frightful scene

was continued or renewed till two thousand persons had perished. Among them were great numbers of country people, who had come into Toulon intending to celebrate a fête that had been proclaimed in honour of the Republic, and who had followed the crowd to the Champ de Mars in the belief that it was the place of public festivity. Three persons only escaped from this hideous carnage—an old man, a marine officer, and a youth, whose strength of constitution enabled him to crawl away in the night from a multitude of slain, so great as to render all attempts at burial impossible for some days. Meanwhile Fréron continued his labours ; the fusillades were several times repeated ; and he boasted, in his letters to the Committee of Public Salvation, that he would continue them till, between the flames and the sword, Toulon and its inhabitants had entirely disappeared ! Between the fusillades and the guillotine, and the women and children who fell into the sea in trying to escape to the English ships, the number who perished during and after the siege amounted to fourteen thousand three hundred and twenty-five.^{1*}

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¹ Prudhom.
vi. 155, 161.

Thus terminated this memorable campaign, the most remarkable in the annals of France, perhaps in the history of the world. From a state of unexampled peril, from the attack of forces which would have crushed Louis XIV. in the plenitude of his power, from civil dissensions which threatened to dismember the state, the Republic emerged triumphant. A revolt, apparently destined to sever the opulent cities of the south from its dominions ; a civil war which consumed the vitals of the western provinces ; an

117.
General reflections on
the campaign.

* “ Les fusillades sont ici à l'ordre du jour ; en voilà 600 qui ne porteront plus les armes contre la République. La mortalité est parmi les sujets de Louis XVIII. Sans la crainte de faire périr d'innocentes victimes, telles que les femmes infirmes, et les patriotes détenus, tout aurait été passé au fil de l'épée ; comme sans la crainte d'incendier l'arsenal et les magasins du port échappés à la rage des Anglais, toute la ville eût été livrée aux flammes. Mais elle ne disparaîtra pas moins du sol de la liberté—cette cité pourrie de Royalisme. Demain, et jours suivans, nous allons procéder au rasement : fusillades jusqu'à ce qu'il n'y ait plus de traîtres.”—FRÉRON *au Comité de Salut Public*. 26 Decembre 1793.—PRUDHOMME, *Crimes de la Révolution*, vi. 160, 161.

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1793.

invasion which had broken through the iron barrier of the northern, and shaken the strength of the eastern frontier, were all defeated. The discomfited English had retired from Toulon ; the Prussians in confusion had recrossed the Rhine ; the tide of conquest was rolled back in the north ; and the valour of the Vendean irretrievably arrested. For these immense advantages the Convention was indebted to the energy of its measures, the ability of its councils, and the enthusiasm of its subjects. In the convulsion of society, not only wickedness, but talent, had risen to the head of affairs ; if history has nothing to show comparable to the crimes which were committed, it has few similar instances of undaunted resolution to commemorate. Impartial justice requires that this praise should be bestowed upon the Committee of Public Salvation : if the cruelty of its internal administration exceeded the worst despotism of the emperors, the dignity of its external conduct rivalled the noblest instances of Roman heroism.

118.
Immense
talent de-
veloped in
France by
the Revolu-
tion.

In talent, it was evident that the Republicans had, before the close of the campaign, acquired a decided preponderance over their opponents. This was the natural consequence of the concentration of all the ability of France in the military service, and the opening which was afforded to merit in every rank to aspire to the highest situations. Drawn from the fertile mines of the middle classes, the talent which now emerged in every department, from the general to the sentinel, formed the basis of a more energetic and intelligent army than had ever appeared in modern Europe ; while the inexhaustible supplies of men which the conscription afforded raised it to a numerical amount beyond anything hitherto known in the world. After having authorised a levy of three hundred thousand men in spring, the Convention, in the beginning of August, ordered a conscription of twelve hundred thousand more. These immense armaments, which, in ordinary times, could never have been attempted

by a regular government, were successively brought into the field during the fervour of a revolution, through the exaltation of spirit which it had produced, and the universal misery which it had engendered. The destruction of commerce, and the closing of all pacific employment, augmented those formidable bands, which issued, as from a fiery volcano, to devastate the surrounding states ; and, after the annihilation of all the known sources of credit, the government derived unparalleled resources in the general confiscation of property.

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As this was a new element, then for the first time introduced into political contests, so all the established governments of Europe were mistaken as to the means of resisting it. They were not aware of the magnitude of the power which was thus roused into action, and hoped to crush it by the same moderate efforts which had been found successful in former wars. While France, accordingly, strained every nerve to recruit its armies, they contented themselves with maintaining their contingents at their former moderate amount, and were astonished when the armies calculated to match two hundred thousand soldiers failed in subduing a million. Hence the rapid series of successes which in every quarter, before the end of the year, signalised the Republican arms ; and the explanation of the fact, that the allied forces, which, in the commencement, were everywhere superior, before the close of the campaign, were on all sides inferior to their opponents. Never was a more memorable year ; the events which occurred during its continuance are pregnant with the most important instruction, both to the soldier and the statesman.

119.
The democratic element hitherto unknown in modern war.

I. The first reflection which suggests itself is the remarkable state of debility of the French Republic at an early period of its history, and the facility with which, to all appearance, its forces would have yielded to a vigorous and concentrated attack from the allied arms. Her armies, during the first three months of the campaign,

120.
Ease with which France might have been conquered at first.

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were defeated in every encounter ; a single battle, in which the Republican loss did not exceed four thousand men, occasioned the abandonment of all Flanders ; the frontiers of France itself were invaded with impunity, and the iron barrier broken through, to an extent never accomplished by Marlborough and Eugene, after successive campaigns at the head of one hundred thousand men. Her army on the Flemish frontier was at length reduced to thirty thousand combatants, and they were in such a state of disorganisation, that they could not by any exertions be brought to face the enemy. "The Convention," says Dumourier, "had no other resource but the army escaped from the camp of Famars to that of Cæsar. Had the Duke of York been detached by Cobourg against the camp of Cæsar, with half his forces, the siege of Valenciennes might have been continued with the other half, and the fate of France sealed in that position." In the darkest days of Louis XIV., France was never placed in such peril as after the capture of Valenciennes.¹

¹ Dum. iv. 4.
Hard. ii. 289.

121.
Impossibility of a state without a powerful army resisting an invasion.

II. These considerations are calculated to dispel the popular illusions as to the capability of an enthusiastic population alone to withstand the attacks of a powerful regular army. Notwithstanding the ardour excited by the successful result of the campaign in 1792, and the conquest of Flanders, the Republican levies were, in the beginning of the following campaign, in such a state of disorganisation and weakness, that they were unable to make head against the Austrians in any encounter, and at length remained shut up in intrenched camps, from obvious and admitted inability to keep the field. The enemy by whom they were attacked was by no means formidable, either from activity or conduct, and yet was uniformly successful. What would have been the result had the Allies been conducted with vigour and ability—led by a Blucher, a Paskewitch, or a Wellington?² By the admission of the Republicans themselves, their forces would have been subdued ; the storming of the camp of

² Dum. iv.
4. Jom. iii.
68.

Cæsar would have overthrown France, and decided the fate of Europe.

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III. Everything conspires to indicate the ruinous effects which followed the resolution taken at the Congress at Antwerp, to convert the war, heretofore undertaken for the overthrow of the Jacobins, into one of aggression and conquest of France itself. The great objects of the Alliance should have been to have separated the cause of that fearful faction from that of the country, and joined in willing bands, to the standards of the Allies, the heroes of La Vendée and the generous citizens of Lyons. By that resolution they severed them for ever, and at length brought all the subjects of the Republic to range themselves cordially and sincerely round the tricolor flag. The subsequent disasters of the war, the divisions which paralysed the combined powers, the unanimity which strengthened the French, may in a great degree be traced to that unhappy deviation from its original principle. And it is remarkable that victory never again was permanently chained to their standards, till, taught by misfortune, they renounced this selfish policy, and recurred, in the great coalition of 1813, to the generous system which had been renounced at Antwerp twenty years before.

1793.

122.

Fatal effects
of the con-
version of
the war into
one of con-
quest.

IV. The important breathing time which the delay occasioned by the siege of Valenciennes and Condé afforded to the French, and the immense advantage which they derived from the new levies which they received, and fresh organisation which they acquired during that period, is a signal proof of the vital importance of fortresses in contributing to national defence. Napoleon has not hesitated to ascribe to the four months thus gained the salvation of France.¹ It is to be constantly kept in view that the Republican armies were then totally unable to keep the field; that behind the frontier fortresses there was neither a defensive position, nor a corps to reinforce them; and that, if driven from their vicinity, the capital was taken, and the war concluded. The suc-

123.

Vast impor-
tance of the
frontier for-
tresses.

¹ Nap. in
Las Cases,
ii. 327.

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cessful issue of the invasions of 1814 and 1815 affords no argument against these principles. From Napoleon's heedlessness or disasters, the frontier fortresses were then in great part unarmed and unprovided, and were in consequence passed with impunity ; or, on being passed, were left to the observation of comparatively small bodies of the German landwehr. The case of half a million of disciplined men, under consummate leaders, assailing a single state, is not the rule but the exception.

124.
Great errors
committed
by the
Allies.

V. The failure of the Allies to take advantage of the debilitated state of their adversaries, is the strongest proof of the erroneous system on which the war was then conducted, and the peculiar ignorance which prevailed as to the mode of combating a revolutionary power. To divide a great army into an extensive chain of posts, and thereby lose all the benefit arising from superiority of force, is generally the weakest mode of conducting hostilities ; but to do so with antagonists in a state of revolution is of all things the most absurd. Passion is then predominant with the multitude ; and how readily is one passion transformed into another—the fervour of ambition into the agony of fear ! By protracting the contest, and conducting the operations on a slow and methodical plan, time is given for the completion of the revolutionary armaments, and the consternation, spread among the people by a succession of disasters, is allowed to subside. Repeatedly, during the early stages of the war, advantages were gained by the Allies, which, if followed up with tolerable vigour, would have become decisive ; and as often did subsequent inactivity or caution render them abortive. New and especially republican levies, easily elated and rendered formidable by victory, are as rapidly depressed by defeat : it is the quality of regular soldiers alone to preserve their firmness in periods of disaster, and present, even after adverse, the intrepidity which recalls prosperous fortune. The system of attack should be suited to the character of the force by which it is opposed ; the methodi-

cal campaign, indispensable in presence of veteran troops, is the worst that can be adopted with the ardent but unsteady levies which are brought forward by a revolutionary state.

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VI. The military establishment of 1792 is the never-ceasing theme of eulogium with the economical British politicians of the present day, and incessant are their efforts to have the forces of the British empire again reduced to that diminutive standard. The result of the first period of the campaign of 1793 may demonstrate how short-sighted, even in a pecuniary point of view, are such niggardly projects. Had Great Britain, instead of twenty thousand, been able to have sent sixty thousand English soldiers to the Continent at that period, what results might have been anticipated from their exertions! Forty thousand native English broke the military strength of Napoleon at Waterloo; and what was the military power of France at the commencement of the war, compared to what was there wielded by that dreaded commander? What would have been gained to Britain had the successes of 1815 come in 1793—the Camp of Cæsar been the field of Waterloo! How many hundreds of thousands required to be sacrificed, how many hundreds of millions expended, before the vantage-ground then held was regained! So true it is, that a nation can never with safety, even to its finances, reduce too low its warlike establishment; that too severe an economy at one time begets too lavish a prodigality at another; and that years of tarnished reputation and wasteful extravagance are required to blot out the effects of a single undue pacific reduction.

125.
Ruinous
effect of
the English
reduction
of force.

Bitterly did England experience, in this campaign, the baneful consequences of the imprudent reduction of military force which had followed the close of the American war. With an army at first not exceeding thirty thousand disposable men, what could be achieved against France in the energy of a Revolution? Yet what fair opportunities, never again to recur, were then afforded to

126.
As exempli-
fied in this
campaign.

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crush the hydra in its cradle! If thirty thousand British troops had been added to the Duke of York's army at the siege of Dunkirk, that important fortress would speedily have fallen, and the advance of the allied army have palsied all the efforts of the Convention; if the same force had aided the insurgents of La Vendée, the white flag would have been advanced to the Tuileries; if it had been sent to Toulon, the constitutional throne would have been at once established in all the south of France. The affairs of Napoleon, in the spring of 1814, were not so hopeless as those of the Republic would have been, if such an addition could have been made at that critical moment to the British invading force.

127.
Cause to
which it
is owing.
The passion
for reduc-
tion among
the people.

This ruinous system of reducing the forces of the country upon the conclusion of hostilities is the cause of almost all the discomfitures which tarnish the reputation, and of more than half the debt which now curbs the energies of Britain. The cause, incident to a free constitution, has been well explained by Dean Tucker. "The patriot and furious anti-courtier always begins with schemes of frugality, and is a zealous supporter of measures of economy. He loudly exclaims against even a small parliamentary army, both on account of its danger and expense. By persevering in these laudable endeavours, he prevents such a number of forces by land and sea from being kept up as are necessary for the common safety of the kingdom. The consequence is, when a war breaks out, new levies are half-formed and half-disciplined, squadrons at sea are half-manned, and the officers mere novices in their business. Ignorance, unskilfulness, and confusion, are unavoidable for a time; the necessary result of which is some defeat received, some stain or dishonour cast upon the arms of Britain. Thus the nation is involved in expenses ten times as great, and made to raise forces twenty times as numerous, as were complained of before, till peace is made, and new schemes of ruinous economy are again called for by a new set of patriots.

Thus the patriotic farce goes round, ending in real tragedy to the nation and mankind."¹ It seems hopeless to expect that this popular cry for costly economy will ever cease in pacific periods, because, even with the recent proof of its ruinous effect at the commencement of the Revolutionary war, we have seen it so fiercely raised for the reduction of the noble force which brought it to a glorious termination. It seems the melancholy fate of each successive generation to be instructed by its own and never by its predecessors' errors ; and perhaps it is a law of nature that such causes should, at stated periods, prostrate the strength of free states, and prevent that progressive growth of their power which might otherwise sink the emulation of independent kingdoms in the slumber of universal dominion.

But although this blind popular passion for pacific reduction may be the principal cause of the serious disasters which, for the last century and a half of English history, have attended the first years of hostilities, yet it is not the only one ; and it is in vain for any one class of society to throw upon another the whole responsibility for a fault which is, in a great degree, common to all. The aristocracy have also, in every period, been deeply implicated in the causes which unhappily so often impair the efficiency of our naval and military establishments. Incessant are the efforts which all the holders of parliamentary influence make, during the tranquillity of peace, to get their connections and dependents elevated to situations which they are frequently incompetent to fill. During the dangers and excitement of war, governments are both compelled by necessity to select the most worthy to discharge momentous and perilous duties, and enabled by the magnitude of their patronage to do so without alienating their parliamentary supporters. But under the limited establishments, and with the comparatively unimportant duties of peace, this is impossible. Reductions on all sides then compel a rigid attention to influ-

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XIII.

1793.

¹ Tucker's
Essays, i. 72.

128.

The selfish
grasping at
office by the
aristocracy.

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1793.

ence in the disposal of situations, while the slumber of pacific life affords a prospect of the incapacity of the persons promoted not being discovered, or not becoming productive of public disaster. During the latter years of a long peace, influential imbecility is daily, in the army and navy, mounting more exclusively to the head of affairs; and when hostilities break out, a large proportion of the officers in high command are generally found to be wholly unfit for the duties devolving on them. Thus, while democratic clamour starves down the establishment to a ruinously low standard in point of amount, aristocratic cupidity paralyses the direction, and nullifies the exertions of that part which is allowed to exist. The disasters at the commencement of the war of 1739, during the first three years of that of 1756, during the whole of the American contest, during the first four years of the Revolutionary strife, and in the dreadful campaign of Affghanistaun in 1840, may all be traced to the combined operation of these causes.

129.
Defects of
English
education in
the same
respect.

Nor is the English system of education and government without an important, and what often proves a disastrous influence on the national fortunes in the commencement, and sometimes through the whole course, of hostilities. No provision is made, in schools or colleges, in general instruction, either for teaching our future statesmen anything connected with their department in the direction of war, or qualifying our future generals to understand the principles or practice of their profession. Young men too often enter the houses of Lords and Commons perfectly initiated in the loves of Dido and Æneas, of Mars and Venus; able to construe Æschylus and write hexameter verses; perhaps skilled in forensic debate, and happy in parliamentary allusions; but as ignorant of the means by which success is to be attained or disaster averted in war, as the child unborn. Youths are moved from school into the army, able indeed to ride and shoot, and they are soon taught the simple details of

military discipline ; but for anything like knowledge of the art of war, you must, in general, ascend to the higher officers in the service, to whom it has been taught by experience. Statesmen are raised to the supreme direction of affairs often from talent in speaking, or readiness in reply, rather than from any practical knowledge they possess, either of the civil or military duties with the direction of which they are intrusted. Power in debate is the one thing needful ; and in that art the British statesmen are unrivalled in modern times. But power in debate is not statesmanlike wisdom. It is often acquired by habits little conducive to it ; and it differs as much from the able direction of an expedition or a campaign, as the skill in a tournament of Amadis de Gaul or Palmerin of England does, from the consummate genius of Wellington or Napoleon. Hence the numerous opportunities of bringing the war to a successful termination which were lost in 1793, from want of military talent and combination in the British government. And to those who reflect on these circumstances, and their illustration in the woful mismanagement which that campaign exhibits, even when the mighty genius of Pitt was in the direction of affairs, and on the constant examples of similar ignorance of the first principles of warlike combination in government, which every period of our history has exhibited—it will probably occur as the most decisive proof of the virtue and energy which free institutions develop in a community, when duly regulated by aristocratic power, that, despite such obstacles, the British empire has unceasingly advanced, and has now attained an eminence unrivalled since the time when the Roman legions, directed by wisdom and led by valour, conquered the world.

CHAPTER XIV.

REIGN OF TERROR: FROM THE FALL OF THE GIRONDISTS TO
THE DEATH OF DANTON.—JUNE 2, 1793—MARCH 31, 1794.

CHAP.
XIV.
—
1793.
1.
General
sanguinary
character of
democracy.

“THE rule of a mob,” says Aristotle, “is the worst of tyrannies ;” * and so experience has proved it, from the caprice of the Athenian democracy to the proscriptions of the French Revolution. The reason is one which always holds, and must remain unaltered while society remains. In contests for power, a monarch has, in general, to dread only the efforts of a rival for the throne ; an aristocracy, the ascendancy of a faction in the nobility ; the populace, the vengeance of all the superior classes in the state. Hence the safety of the first is usually secured by the destruction of a single rival and his immediate adherents ; the jealousy of the second extinguished by the proscription or exile of a limited number of families ; but the terrors of the last require the destruction of whole ranks in society. They constantly feel that, if they do not destroy the superior classes in the state, they will, in the long run, fall again under their influence, and their leaders in consequence be subjected to punishment. Hence the envenomed and relentless animosity by which they are actuated towards them. Similar feelings are not experienced in nearly the same degree by the holders of property on the resumption of power, because they are not felt to be necessary for the securing of their authority. Measures dictated by the dread of individuals become

* “Τούτων των τυραννίδων τελευταία ἡ δημοκρατία.”—ARIST. *De Politica*.

unnecessary when they have perished ; those levelled against the influence of classes require to be pursued till the class itself is destroyed.

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XIV.
1793.

It was not a mere thirst for blood which made Marat and Robespierre declare and act upon the principle, that there could be no security for the Republic till two hundred and sixty thousand heads had fallen. Hardly any men are cruel for cruelty's sake ; the leaders of the Jacobins were not more so than the reckless and ambitious of any other country would be, if exposed to the influence of similar passions. Ambition is the origin of desperate measures, because it renders men sensible only of the dictates of an insatiable passion : terror is the most common source of cruelty. Men esteem the lives of others lightly when their own are at stake. The revolutionary innovations being directed against the whole aristocratic and influential classes, their vengeance was felt to be implacable, and no security could be expected to the democratic leaders, till their whole opponents were destroyed. Thence the incessant, and often ridiculous, dread of a counter revolutionary movement, which was evinced by the democratic party, and which so often impelled them into the most sanguinary measures, when there was in reality no danger to be apprehended.* In the strife of contending classes, the sphere of individual vengeance was fearfully augmented. Not one, but fifty leaders had terrors to allay, rivals to extinguish, hatred to gratify. Amidst the contests for influence, and the

2.
Cause of this
peculiarity.

* So true are the words of Metastasio—

———“ E in qual funesta entrai
Necessità d'esser malvagio ! A quanti
Delitti obbliga un solo ! E come, oh Dio,
Un estremo mi porta all'altro estremo !
Son crudel, perchè temo, e temo appunto,
Perchè son sì crudel. Congiunta in guisa
E al mio timor la crudeltà, che l'una
Nell' altro si trasforma, e l'un dell'altra
E cagione ed effetto.”

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dread of revenge, every man sacrificed his individual to his political connections: private friendship, public character, yielded to the force of personal apprehension, or the vehemence of individual ambition. A forced coalition between the most dissimilar characters took place from the pressure of similar danger; friends gave up friends to the vengeance of political adversaries; individual security, private revenge, were purchased by the sacrifice of ancient attachment.

3.
Formation
of a new
government
by the Jaco-
bins.

France experienced the truth of these principles with unmitigated severity during the later stages of the Revolution. But it was not immediately that the leaders of the victorious faction ventured upon the practical application of their principles. The first feeling with the multitude, on the overthrow of the Girondists, was exultation at the victory they had gained, and unbounded anticipations of felicity from the assumption of power by the most popular and vehement of their demagogues. The most extravagant joy prevailed among the Jacobins at their decisive triumph. "The people," said Robespierre, "have by their conduct confounded all their opponents. Eighty thousand men have been under arms nearly a week, and not one shop has been pillaged, not one drop of blood shed. They have proved by that whether the accusation was well founded, that they wished to profit by the disorders to commit murder and pillage. Their insurrection was spontaneous; the result of an universal moral conviction; and the Mountain, itself feeble and irresolute, showed that it had no hand in producing it. The insurrection was a great moral and popular effort, worthy of the enlightened people among whom it arose. The people of Paris have afforded an example which may well make all the monarchs of the earth tremble, and silence the calumnies they pour forth against us. All we have to do now is to complete our triumph, and destroy the Royalists.¹ We must gain possession of the committees, and spend our nights in framing good

¹ Journal
des Jaco-
bins, 7th
June 1791,
No. 423.

laws." Under such plausible colours did the revolutionists veil a movement which destroyed the only remnants of virtue in the democracy, and delivered over France in fetters to the Reign of Terror.

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The aspect of the Convention after this great event was entirely changed from what it had ever been before. Terror had mastered its resistance; proscription had thinned its ranks. The hall was generally silent. The right, and the majority of the centre, never voted, but seemed, by their withdrawal from any active part, to condemn the whole proceedings of the Jacobins, and await intelligence from the provinces as the signal for action. The debates of the legislature, as they appear in the *Moniteur*, suddenly contract into nothing. All the decrees proposed by the ruling party were adopted in silence, without any discussion. By a decree of the Convention, the whole power of government was vested in the hands of the Decemvirs till the conclusion of a general peace. They made no concealment of the despotic nature of the authority with which they were thus invested. "You have nothing now to dread," said St Just, "from the enemies of freedom; all we have to do is to make its friends triumphant, and that must be done at all hazards. In the critical situation of the Republic, it is in vain to re-establish the constitution: it would offer impunity to every attack on liberty, by wanting the force to repress such. You are too far removed from conspiracies to have the means of checking them; the sword of the law must be intrusted to surer hands; it must turn everywhere, and fall with the rapidity of lightning on all its enemies." In silent dread the Assembly and the people heard the terrible declaration; its justice was universally acknowledged. All now saw that the insupportable evils of anarchy could only be arrested by the sanguinary arm of despotism.¹

4.
Mournful
aspect of the
Convention,
and decree
vesting
supreme
power in a
few.

¹ Deux
Amis, x.
318, 322.
Mig. ii. 296.
Toul. iv.
298. Th.
v. 7.

But the necessity of some central executive power was speedily felt, to make head against the innumerable

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5.

New forma-
tion of an
executive
power in the
Committee
of Public
Salvation.

dangers and difficulties, external and internal, in which France was involved. The administration had been in the hands of the Girondists ; some central power was indispensably required, on their overthrow, to put a period to the anarchy which threatened the country. The Committee of Public Salvation presented the skeleton of a government already formed. Created some months before, it was at first composed of the neutral party ; the victorious Jacobins, after the 31st May, found themselves in possession of its power. Robespierre, St Just, Couthon, Billaud Varennes, and Collot d'Herbois, were successively elected members, and speedily ejected Hérault de Séchelles, and the other partisans of Danton.* To the ruling Jacobins, the different departments of government were assigned ; St Just was intrusted with the duty of denouncing its enemies ; Couthon with bringing forward its general measures ; Billaud Varennes and Collot d'Herbois with the management of the departments ; Carnot was made minister of war ; Barère, the panegyrist and orator of the government ; Robespierre general dictator over all.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxviii. 147.
Mig. ii. 295,
296. Toul.
iv. 98. Th.
v. 94, 95.

6.

Committee
of General
Safety, and
Municipa-
lity of Paris.

While the practical administration of affairs was thus lodged with despotic power in the hands of the Committee of Public Salvation, the general superintendence of the police was vested in another Committee, styled of General Safety, subordinate to the former, but still possessed of most formidable authority. Inferior to both in power, and now deprived of much of its political importance by the vast influence of the Committee of Public Salvation, the municipality of Paris began to turn its attention to the internal regulation of the city, and there exercised its power with the most despotic rigour. It took under

* The Committee of Public Salvation was not immediately altered after the 31st May. On 10th July it was changed, and Barère, Jean-Bon St André, Gasparin, Couthon, Thuriot, St Just, Prieur (de la Marne), Hérault de Séchelles, and R. Lindet, were chosen members. On 27th July Robespierre was elected in room of Gasparin ; Carnot and Prieur (de la Côte d'Or) were added on the 14th August ; and Billaud Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, and Garamsin, on the 6th September.—*Histoire Parlementaire*, xxviii. 147.

its cognisance the police of the metropolis, the public subsistence, the markets, the public worship, the theatre, the courtesans, and framed on all these subjects a variety of minute and vexatious regulations, which were speedily adopted over all France. Chaumette, its public accuser, ever sure of the applause of the multitude, especially when he tormented their creditors, exerted in all these particulars the most rigorous authority. Consumed by an incessant desire to subject everything to new regulations, continually actuated by the wish to invade domestic liberty, this legislator of the market-places and warehouses became daily more vexatious and formidable; while Pache, the mayor, indolent and imperturbable, agreed to everything which was proposed, and left to Chaumette all the influence of popularity with the rabble.¹

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¹ Séances de la Commune, Juillet—Aout, Moniteur, Hist. Parl. xxviii. 563, 567. Th. v. 94, 96.

The correspondence which the Jacobins carried on over all France, with the most ardent and factious in the towns and villages, speedily gave them the entire direction of the country, and rendered the Committee of Public Salvation at Paris, resting on the support of their central club, altogether irresistible from one end of the Republic to the other. It was the command which that party, as the most violent of the Revolutionists, had everywhere obtained of the magistracies, which was the secret of this terrible power. The Jacobins of Paris were the incarnation of the whole civil and military force of the commonwealth; the Committee of Public Salvation was the incarnation of the Jacobins of Paris; and Robespierre was the Avatar who personified the Committee of Public Salvation. The democratic party, in possession of all the municipalities in the departments, in consequence of their being elected by universal suffrage,—armed with the powers of a terrible police, intrusted with the right of making domiciliary visits, of disarming or imprisoning the suspected persons,—soon obtained irresistible authority. In vain the armed sections and battalions of the national guard in some places strove to resist; want of union and

7.
State of the provinces.

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

¹Th. iv. 157,
158. Hist.
Parl. xxviii.
162, 167.
Deux Amis,
xi. 3, 7.

organisation paralysed all their efforts. In almost all the provincial towns of France they had courage enough to take up arms, and sometimes endeavoured to withstand the dreadful tyranny of the magistracies; but these bodies, based on the support and election of the multitude, in the end everywhere prevailed over the whole class of proprietors, and all the peaceable citizens, who in vain invoked the liberty, tranquillity, and security to property, for the preservation of which they were enrolled. This was, generally speaking, the situation of parties over all France, though the strife was more ardent in those situations where the masses were densest, and danger most evidently threatened the revolutionary party.¹

8.
Of Lyons,
Bordeaux,
and Mar-
seilles.

The spirit of faction had been for long, in an especial manner, conspicuous at Lyons. A club of Jacobins, as already mentioned, had some time previously been there formed, composed of deputies from all the clubs of note in the south of France, at the head of which was an ardent republican of Italian origin, named Chalier, a man of the most atrocious character, who was at the same time an officer of the municipality and president of the civil tribunal. The Jacobins had got possession of all the offices in the municipality, except the mayoralty, which was still in the hands of a Girondist of the name of Nevière. The Jacobin Club made use of the utmost efforts to displace him, loudly demanded a Revolutionary Tribunal, and paraded through the streets a guillotine recently sent down from Paris "to strike terror into the traitors and aristocrats." Chalier was at the head of all these revolutionary movements, and with such success were his efforts attended, that, for four days in August 1792, the city of Lyons was the prey of anarchy and murder, and the whole of the autumn of that year, and spring of 1793, had been passed in the most vehement strife between the two parties. A list of eight hundred persons, who had signed a petition in favour of moderate government, was kept by Chalier, and they were all doomed to death: the day of the massacre being fixed

for the 9th May, when also a Revolutionary Tribunal was to be established. On the other hand, the armed sections, composed of the shopkeepers and better class of citizens, who were strongly attached to the principles of the Girondists, vigorously exerted themselves to resist the establishment of a tribunal which was shedding such torrents of blood in the capital. Everything already announced that desperate strife of which this devoted city so soon became the theatre.¹

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¹ Deux
Amis, xi. 92,
99. Thiers,
iv. 161.

In the other towns in the south of France, the Girondists were all-powerful, and the utmost horror at the anarchical party, who had obtained the ascendancy at Paris and in the northern provinces, was already conspicuous. Rennes, Caen, Evreux, Marseilles, Toulouse, Nimes, Saintes, Grenoble, Bayonne, all shared their sentiments. Almost all the deputies who formed the party of the Gironde came from these towns, and their principles perfectly represented the feelings by which the great majority of the better class of citizens was animated. From the mouth of the Rhone to that of the Garonne, these sentiments were nearly universal, and in some even the municipalities were in the hands of the moderate party. At Bordeaux these principles were so strong, that they already bordered on Royalist feelings; while the whole country, from the Gironde and the entrance of the Loire, by the shores of the ocean to the mouth of the Seine, was openly attached to the ancient institutions of the country, and beheld with undisguised horror the atrocities with which the Revolutionary party at Paris had already stained their career.²

9.
State of the
other towns
in the south
and west of
France.

² Hist. Parl.
xxviii. 148.
Th. iv. 160,
163.

Such was the state of public feeling in France when the revolution of 31st May and the fall of the Girondists took place. That catastrophe set the whole of the southern departments into a flame; the imprisonment of the deputies of the national representatives by the mob of Paris, the open assumption of government by the municipality of that city, excited the most profound indignation. In most of the cities the magistracy had fallen, as already

10.
General
coalition of
the Depart-
ments
against the
Convention.

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

May 29.

June 5.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxviii. 147,
149. Th. v.
8, 10, 11.

11.
And com-
mencement
of an insur-
rection.
June 13.

observed, into the hands of the Jacobins, who were supported by the parent club at Paris and the Executive ; while the armed sections were attached to the opposite views. The catastrophe of the Girondists at Paris brought these conflicting powers almost everywhere into collision. At Evreux the Jacobin authorities were put under arrest, and an armed force of four thousand men was organised ; at Marseilles the sections rose against the municipality, and violently seized possession of the magistracy ; at Lyons a furious combat took place—the sections took the Hôtel de Ville by assault, dispossessed the magistracy, shut up the Jacobin Club, and gained the command of the city. At Bordeaux, the arrest of the Girondists, of whose talents the inhabitants were justly proud, excited the most violent sensation, which was brought to a crisis by the arrival of several of the fugitive deputies, who announced that their illustrious brethren were in fetters, and in hourly expectation of death. Cries of fury were immediately heard in all the streets ; a general feeling of indignation and of despair impelled the citizens to their several rallying-points. The armed sections were quickly in motion, and the municipal authorities, elected during the first fervour of the Revolution, wrote to the executive council at Paris, that they were deprived of all power, and unable to say what events a day might bring forth.¹

On the 13th June the department of Eure gave the signal of insurrection. The plan agreed on was, that four thousand men should march upon Paris to liberate the Convention. Great part of Normandy soon followed the example, and all the departments of Brittany were ere long in arms. The whole valley of the Loire, with the exception of that which was the theatre of the war of La Vendée, proposed to send deputies to Bourges to depose the usurping faction at Paris. At Bordeaux the sensation was extreme. All the constituted authorities assembled together ; erected themselves into a committee styled of Public Salvation ; declared that the Conven-

tion was no longer free ; appointed an armed force, and despatched couriers into all the neighbouring departments. Marseilles sent forth a determined petition ; the whole mountaineers of the Jura were in a ferment ; and the departments of the Rhone, the Garonne, and the Pyrenees, joined themselves to the vast confederacy. So far did the spirit of revolt proceed, that at Lyons, as already detailed, a prosecution was instituted against Chalier and the leaders of the Jacobin Club, whose projects for a repetition of the massacres of September at Paris had now been fully brought to light ; and deputies, to concert measures for their common safety, were received from Marseilles, Bordeaux, and Caen. Seventy departments were in a state of insurrection ; and fifteen only remained wholly devoted to the faction which had mastered the Convention.¹

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xxviii. 148,
151. Deux.
Amis, x. 324,
326. Th. v.
13, 14.

Opinions were divided at Paris how to meet so formidable a danger. Barère proposed, in the name of the Committee of Public Salvation, that the revolutionary committees, which had become so formidable throughout France, from their numerous arrests, should be everywhere annulled ; that the primary assemblies should be assembled at Paris to name a commander of the armed force, in lieu of Henriot, who had been denounced by the insurgents, and that thirty deputies should be sent as hostages to the provinces. But the Jacobins were not disposed to any measures of conciliation. Robespierre adjourned the consideration of the report of the committee ; and Danton, raising the voice so well known in all the perils of the Revolution, exclaimed—" The Revolution has passed through many crises, and it will survive this as it has done the others. It is in the moments of a great production that political, like physical bodies, seem menaced by an approaching destruction. The thunder rolls, but it is in the midst of its roar that the great work which is to consummate the happiness of twenty-five millions of men will be accomplished. Recol-

12.
Energetic
measures of
the Jacobins
at Paris to
meet the
danger.
June 10.

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XIV.

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lect what happened at the time of the conspiracy of Lafayette. In what state were we then? The patriots proscribed or oppressed; civil war threatening everywhere. Now we are in the same situation. It is said the insurrection in Paris has occasioned disturbances in the departments! Let us declare, in the face of the universe, that Paris glories in the revolt of 31st May, and that, without the cannon of that day, the conspirators would have triumphed, and we should have been slaves!" In this spirit, the Convention, instead of yielding, adopted the most vigorous measures, and spoke in the most menacing strain. They declared that Paris, in placing itself in a state of insurrection, had deserved well of the country; that the arrested deputies should forthwith be lodged in prison like ordinary criminals; that a call of the Convention should be made, and all those absent without excuse be instantly expelled, and their place supplied by new representatives; that all attempts at correspondence or coalition among the departmental authorities were illegal, and that those who presided in them should forthwith be sent to Paris. They annulled the resolution of the department of the Eure, ordered all the refractory authorities to be sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal, and sent the most ardent Jacobins into the provinces to enforce submission to the central government.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxviii. 200,
201. Moni-
teur, 11 Juin.

13.
The Girondist
combination is
dissolved.

These vigorous measures effectually broke this formidable league. The departments, little accustomed to resist the authority of the government at Paris, returned one by one to submission. Hostile preparations were made at Bordeaux, Lyons, Rouen, and Marseilles; but the insurgents, without a leader or central point of union, and destitute of all support from the nobility and natural chiefs of the country, were unable in most places to struggle with the energetic Committee of Public Salvation, wielding at will the army, the Jacobin clubs, and the municipalities. France now felt the fatal consequences of the centralisation of all power in Paris by the Constituent Assembly,

of the democratic election of all the provincial authorities by universal suffrage, and of the general desertion of their country by the emigrant noblesse. These causes had utterly prostrated the strength of the provinces, and already everywhere established in absolute force the despotism of the capital. They continued their preparations, however, and refused to send the proscribed authorities to Paris ; but their ardour gradually cooled, and in two months the germ of revolt existed only in vigour at Lyons, Toulon, and Marseilles, where it brought about those bloody catastrophes which have been already recorded.¹

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1793.

¹ Th. v. 10,
18, 27, 61,
75. Deux
Amis, x.
326, 327.
Hist. Parl.
xxviii. 352.

The great engine which the Jacobins made use of to inflame the popular passions against their opponents, and counteract the general burst of indignation which followed in the departments the proscription of the Girondists, was the charging them with the project of destroying the unity of the Republic, and establishing, instead of one mighty state, a federal union of small republics. That this project was entertained by many of the Girondists, is certain ; nor indeed could they well avoid anxiously wishing for the establishment of such a system, considering the incalculable evils which they saw coming on their country and themselves, by the centralisation of all power in the hands of a violent and sanguinary faction at Paris, and the apparent prosperity and happiness which, under the federal system, the United States were enjoying. But the Jacobins, by incessantly representing that design as amounting, as in fact it did, to a partition of France, and as rendering it wholly unable to resist the attacks of the European monarchies, succeeded in generally rousing the national spirit against the fallen party, and cooling the ardour of those in the departments who had taken up arms in their defence. On the other hand, the leading principle of the Jacobins, which in a great degree produced their popularity in Paris, was the constant determination they evinced and acted on, to centralise everything in the capital, and render it all in

14.
Great effect
of the Feder-
alism im-
puted to the
Girondists.

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

¹ Journ. de
Lyons, No.
100 and 109.
Hist. Parl.
xxiv. 388 ;
and xxviii.
353, 354.
Deux Amis,
x. 327, 329.

15.
Formation
of a new
constitution.
June 10.

all over France.* Meanwhile the reaction at Lyons, where, during the first burst of public indignation at the arrest of the Girondists, the federal party had gained an entire ascendancy, became terrible. The Revolutionary Tribunal, established by the Jacobins for the destruction of their enemies, now seized by another party, was worked with fearful efficacy against themselves. Numerous arrests took place ; and, in July alone, eighty-three persons were ordered to be brought to trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal at Lyons ; and though one only of these, Chalier, suffered death, yet it was attended with circumstances of a very shocking kind. Though his crimes richly deserved that punishment, yet was his execution peculiarly horrible. Four times the guillotine (as yet a novel instrument in that region) missed its blow, and his head was at length severed from his body by means of a knife.¹

The Convention shortly after, now wholly under the power of the Jacobins, proceeded to the formation of a constitution, the most democratic that ever existed upon earth. Eight days completed the work. Every Frenchman of twenty-one years of age was entitled to exercise the rights of a citizen ; a deputy was named by every fifty thousand citizens. On the 1st of May of every year, the primary assemblies were to meet, without any convocation, to renew the deputies. It was adopted without discussion, and instantly circulated over all France. "The most democratic constitution that ever existed," said Robespierre in the Jacobins, "has issued from the bosom of an assembly composed of counter-revolutionists, now purged of its unworthy members. We can now offer to the universe a constitutional code, infinitely superior to any that ever existed, which exhibits the sublime and majestic image of French regeneration. We may now

* "Développer l'idée que Paris n'est que le quartier-général de la République, le centre du gouvernement, une armée sans cesse existante : qu'elle n'existe, qu'elle ne vit, que par les revenus qu'elle fait dans les départemens." — *Notes de PAYAN, agent de ROBESPIERRE. Papiers Inédits trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE, ii. 388.*

despise the efforts of calumny ; we can say—There is the answer of the patriot deputies ; there is the work of the Mountain.” Chabot answered—“ In this constitution, so loudly praised, I see a power at once colossal and libertine. When you establish so powerful an executive, you sow anew the seeds of royalty. I am told that this power has no *veto* ; but what does that signify ? I am asked, what will be the guarantee of liberty ? I answer, the guillotine.”¹

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1793.

¹ Journ. des
Jacobins,
12 Juin,
No. 431.

But there never was a greater mistake than to imagine that this constitution, so republican in form, conferred any real liberties on the people. Its only effect was to concentrate the whole authority of the state in the hands of a few popular leaders. Thenceforward the Committee of Public Salvation at Paris exercised, without opposition, all the powers of government. It named and dismissed the generals, the judges, and the juries, appointed the provincial authorities, brought forward all public measures in the Convention, and launched its thunder against every opposing faction. By means of its commissioners it ruled the provinces, generals, and armies, with absolute sway ; and soon after the Law of Suspected Persons placed the personal freedom of every subject at its disposal ; the Revolutionary Tribunal rendered it the master of every life ; the requisitions and the maximum, of every fortune ; the accusations in the Convention, of every member of the legislature. The Law of the Suspected, which augmented so prodigiously this tremendous power of the Decemvirs, passed on the 17th September. It declared all persons liable to arrest, who, “ either by their conduct, their relations, their conversation, or their writing, have shown themselves the partisans of tyranny or of federation, or the enemies of freedom ; all persons who have not discharged their debts to the country ; all nobles, the husbands, wives, parents, children, brothers, sisters, or agents of emigrants, who have not incessantly manifested their devotion to the Revolution.”¹ Under

16.
Vast powers
of the Com-
mittee of
Public Sal-
vation.

Sept. 17.
¹ Mig. ii.
296, 297.
Th. v. 59,
93, 94, 95.
Lac. ii. 92.
Hist. Parl.
xxix. 109.
112. Moni-
teur, 18
Sept. Lac.
ii. 92. Mig.
ii. 296, 297.

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XIV.

1793.

17.
Formation
of revolu-
tionary
Committees
over all
France.

this law, no person had any chance of safety, but in going the utmost length of revolutionary fury.*

The established revolutionary committees were declared the judges of the persons liable to arrest. Their number augmented with frightful rapidity; Paris had soon forty-eight. Every village throughout the country followed its example in instituting them. The number of revolutionary committees, which sprang up in every part of the kingdom to carry into execution this terrible law, was almost incredible. Fifty thousand were soon in operation, from Calais to Bayonne. Five hundred thousand persons, drawn from the dregs of society, disposed in these committees of the lives and liberties of every man in France. With generous resolution, some men entered them with the design of arresting their oppression: they were soon expelled to make way for more obedient ministers of the will of the dictators. Every member of these committees received three francs a-day, and their number was no less than 540,000. It may readily be conceived that, in a starving community thirsting for gold, the revolutionary committees were not long of being filled up, with such encouragement. According to the calculations of Cambon, the finance minister to the Convention, they cost the nation annually 591,000,000 of francs in assignats, or about £24,000,000 sterling.¹ In the immense number of the most active, ambitious, and wicked of the people who were enlisted on the side of

¹ Deux
Anis, x.
2-4. Hist.
Parl. xxix.
47, 48.

* This atrocious law, as explained by a decree of the municipality of Paris, which was circulated over all France, gave the following definition of suspected persons:—1. All those who, in the assemblies of the people, attest their enthusiasm by cries, menaces, or crafty discourses. 2. All those who more prudently speak only of the misfortunes of the Republic, and are always ready to spread bad news with an affected air of sorrow. 3. All those who have changed their conduct and language according to the course of events, who were mute on the crimes of the Royalists and Federalists, and loudly exclaim against the slight faults of the Republicans. 4. All those who bewail the situation of the farmers or avaricious merchants who have had their property taken from them by the forced requisitions. 5. Those who have the words "Liberty," "Country," and "Republic," in their mouths, who frequent the society of priests, gentlemen, Feuillants, Moderates, or Aristocrats, or take an interest in their sufferings. 6. Those who have not taken an active part in supporting the cause of the people, and excuse themselves for their lukewarmness by alleging their patriotic gifts, or services in the national guard. 7. Those who testified indifference

the revolutionary government, and personally interested in its preservation, is to be found the real secret of the firm establishment and long continuance of the Reign of Terror.

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The calculations of these inferior agents of cruelty soon outstripped those of their masters. Marat had asserted that 260,000 heads must fall before freedom was secure. The revolutionary committees discovered that 700,000 persons must be sacrificed. The prisons were ere long crowded with victims in every town in France. A more speedy mode of disposing of them was proposed than the massacre of 2d September. "Let them quake in their cells," said Collot d'Herbois in the Convention: "let the base traitors tremble at the successes of our enemies: let a mine be dug under the prisons, and at the approach of those whom they call liberators, let a spark blow them into the air." The retreat of the allied armies rendered unnecessary the inhuman proposal at that moment; and famine, pestilence, and the guillotine, soon made its renewal superfluous. Such was the rapidity of the executions, that it exceeded not only anything ever witnessed, but anything hitherto deemed possible. "In the name of equality," says the Republican annalist, "they established a band of permanent assassins; in the name of liberty, they transformed our cities into bastilles; in the name of justice, they everywhere erected a tribunal to consummate murders;¹ in the name of humanity, they poured forth everywhere rivers

18.
Atrocious
calculations
of these in-
ferior agents
of the Revo-
lution.

¹ Deux
Amis, x. 2;
xi. 45, 47.
Th. v. 353.
Hist. Parl.
xxix. 47.
Lac. ii. 93,
94. Châ-
teaub. Etud.
Hist. Préf.
97, 98.

on the proclamation of the Republican constitution, or have expressed vain fears as to its durability. 8. All those who, if they have done nothing against liberty, have done nothing for it. 9. All who do not attend regularly the meetings of their sections, and allege, as an excuse, that they do not like to speak in public, or that their time is occupied by their private affairs. 10. Those who speak with contempt of the constituted authorities, the insignia of the law, the popular societies, or the defenders of liberty. 11. Those who have signed any anti-revolutionary petitions, or frequented societies or clubs of the higher classes. 12. All who were partisans of Lafayette, or served under him in the execution of the Champ de Mars.—Under these ample clauses, every one was embraced who was obnoxious to the Revolutionists; and the number of prisoners in Paris alone was raised in a few days from three hundred to three thousand, embracing all that remained of the elegance of the Faubourg St Germaine.—*Hist. Parl.* xxix. 108—112.

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of blood. Robbery was unpunished, spoliation decreed, divorce encouraged, prostitution pensioned, irreligion lauded, falsehood rewarded, tears interdicted. An eye wet with pity led to the scaffold. Infancy, old age, grace, beauty, genius, worth, were alike conducted to the guillotine. A general torpor paralysed France : the fear of death froze every heart ; its name was inscribed on every door."

19.
This power
was every-
where based
on the sup-
port of the
multitude.

This terrible power was everywhere based upon the co-operation of the multitude. That formidable body generally aided in extending the Reign of Terror : in the clubs, by incessant denunciations of the opulent or respectable classes ; in the committees, by multiplying the number of vindictive committals. They supported the sword of the Decemvirs, because it fell upon the class above themselves, and opened to the indigent the wealth and the employments of the better ranks in the state : because it flattered them by the possession of power which they were wholly disqualified to exercise, and ruined the higher ranks, whom they had been taught to regard as their natural enemies. These revolutionary measures were executed over the whole extent of France with the last severity. Conceived by the most ardent minds, they were violent in principle ; carried into effect far from the leaders who framed them, they were rendered still more oppressive by the brutal character of the agents to whom their execution was intrusted. Part of the citizens were compelled to quit their homes ; others were immured in dungeons as suspected ; the barn-yards of the farmers, the warehouses of the merchants, the shops of the tradesmen, were forcibly emptied for the use of the armies or the government, and nothing but an elusory paper was given in exchange. The forced loans were exacted with the utmost rigour. To one the commissioners said, " You are worth 10,000 livres a-year ;" to another, " You have 20,000 ;" and, to save their heads from the guillotine, they were happy to surrender their property to these

demands. No better picture can be desired of the tyranny of these despotic commissioners than is furnished by the report of one of their number to the Convention. "Everywhere," said Laplanche, who had been sent to the department of Cher, "I have made terror the order of the day ; everywhere I have imposed heavy contributions on the rich and the aristocrats. From Orleans I have extracted fifty thousand francs ; and in two days, at Bourges, I raised two millions : where I could not appear in person, my delegates have amply supplied my place. I have dismissed all federalists, imprisoned all the suspected, put all the Sans-culottes in authority. I have forcibly married all the priests, everywhere electrified the hearts and inflamed the courage of the people. I have passed in review numerous battalions of the national guard, to confirm their republican spirit, and guillotined numbers of Royalists. In a word, I have completely fulfilled my imperial mandate, and acted everywhere as a warm partisan of the Mountain, and faithful representative of the Revolution." The Convention approved of his proceedings.¹

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1793.

¹ Journ. de la Montagne, No. 140, p. 1020. Moniteur, 29 Sept. Th. v. 353, 354. Mig. ii. 297.

To obliterate as far as possible all former recollections, a new era was established. They changed the divisions of the year, the names of the months and weeks. The ancient and venerable institution of Sunday was abolished ; the period of rest fixed at every tenth day ; time was measured by divisions of ten days ; and the year was divided into twelve equal months, beginning on the 22d September. These changes were preparatory to a general abolition of the Christian religion, and substitution of the worship of Reason in its stead. About the same time Mr Pitt was, by a decree of the Convention, declared an " enemy of the human race." In the same sitting, it was ordered that all the castles and chateaus in the interior should be demolished. The splendid pile of Versailles narrowly escaped destruction ; as it was, the whole magnificent furniture it contained, the accumulation of centuries, was broken up and sold, and the royal apartments were converted into barracks

20.
New era established ; Sunday abolished ; new division of the Revolutionary Tribunal ; and decree against English commerce. Sept. 12.

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XIV.

1793.

¹ Deux
Amis, x. 77,
78. Hist.
Parl. xxviii.
413. Lac.
ii. 84. Toul.
iv. 279.
Sept. 9.

for the soldiers, by whom many of the finest of them were shamefully destroyed. Straw bivouacs were strewed, wood fires lighted on the marble floors of the royal apartments ; the soldiers amused themselves with discharging their loaded muskets at the paintings of Le Brun on the walls.¹ Notwithstanding the vigour and unrelenting severity of the Revolutionary Tribunal at Paris, it was far from answering the views of its founders, or the expectations of the multitude. On the 9th September, accordingly, it was remodelled, and its powers enlarged by a decree of the Convention, which is singularly instructive as to the rapid progress in the thirst for blood in the metropolis. By this decree the Revolutionary Tribunal was divided into *four* chambers, each with co-ordinate powers, and all sitting at the same time. Each was to have its public accuser, judges, and juries. This was avowedly based on the necessity of proceeding at once against the moderates, who formed a numerous portion of the community. “The time has now arrived,” said Chaumette, at the Jacobins, “when the moderates must undergo the same fate as the aristocrats.”² In the midst of these domestic changes, the Committee of Public Salvation did not lose sight of their inveterate hostility against England. On the 21st September, Barère, in the name of that body, brought forward a long and impassioned report, characterised by more than the usual amount of animosity against this country. “The hatred of kings and of Carthage,” said he, “founded the Roman constitution ; the hatred of kings, of emigrants, of nobles, and of the English, ought to consolidate the French Republic. Frenchmen, Europeans, Neutral Powers, Northern Powers, you have the same interest as we in the safety of France. Carthage tormented Italy ; London torments Europe ; it is a wolf placed on the side of the Continent to devour it, a political excrescence which it is the first duty of liberty to destroy.” In pursuance of these principles, the Convention passed two decrees, the first declaring that no goods or merchandise were, sub-

²Journ. de la
Montagne,
No. 97.
Hist. Parl.
xxix. 52.
Mig. ii. 298.
Sept. 21.

sequent to 1st January 1794, to be imported into any harbours or colonies of the Republic, except directly, and in French vessels; the second totally prohibiting all coasting trade in France, or colonial trade between France and her colonies, but in French vessels, under pain of a fine of 3000 francs and confiscation of the vessel and cargo.¹

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1793.

¹ Decree,
Sept. 21.
Hist. Parl.
xxxii. 469,
481.

But all these changes, important as they were, yielded in magnitude to the decree of the Convention on October 10, on the new organisation of the government. This decree was based on a minute and able report by St Just in the name of the Committee of Public Salvation, which fully admitted the deplorable internal state of the Republic, and the total inefficacy of all the measures hitherto taken for the establishment of a regular government, in lieu of the monarchy which had been overthrown. "The administration of the armies," said he, "is overrun by brigands. They sell the rations of the horses; the battalions are in want of cannon and draught animals to draw them; subordination is at an end; all the world robs and sets the government at defiance. The law of the maximum has proved entirely nugatory; the enemies of the people, more rich than they, buy the provisions above the maximum; the markets are overruled by the cupidity of sellers: the price of provisions is lowered, but the provisions themselves have disappeared. The cultivators, wherever they could, have sold their produce to our enemies in preference to ourselves. The commissaries of the armies, the agents of all kinds, have pillaged at least three milliards (£120,000,000), and from the very enormity of their gains they have derived additional means of corrupting the people. The rich have become richer in spite of the taxes laid on them; the dreadful misery of the people has improved their relative situation. Every one has pillaged the state. There is not a single military commander who is not, at this moment, founding his fortune on treachery in favour of the cause of kings. The highest officers of government are

21.
Report of St
Just on the
state of the
Republic.
Oct. 10.

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XIV.

1793.

still worse. All places are bought, and it is no longer men of property who buy them. Scoundrels purchase on the prospect of plunder : if you chase one from one place, ten enter in at another. The agents of the hospitals have sold their provisions to La Vendée. The commissaries for the armies have become the worst of monopolisers. The assignats have hitherto constituted the strength of the state, but let us not deceive ourselves ; if they are not withdrawn from circulation, their holders will enter into competition with the cultivators and the producers, and industry will be ruined. The government has lost half their value in the sale of the national domains ; the Republic is the prey of twenty thousand fools or villains who corrupt or cheat it. Government is overwhelmed with correspondence ; the bureaux have succeeded to the monarchy ; *the demon of writing has invaded the state*, and subordination is at an end. I understand now the wisdom of the Egyptians and the Romans ; *they wrote little and thought much* : government cannot exist without laconism in style. The public service has ceased to be a profession, it has become a trade. The government is a hierarchy of errors and crimes." Such is a picture of revolutionary France drawn by one of the most ardent of the revolutionists. Contrast it with the worst periods of the monarchy, as drawn by the bitterest of its opponents.¹

¹ Rapport de St Just, Oct. 10. Hist. Parl. xxix. 159, 167. Moniteur, Oct. 11.

22.

Decree vesting supreme power in the Committee of Public Salvation. Oct. 10.

The remedy proposed by St Just, and adopted by the Convention, for these disastrous evils, consisted in a prodigious increase of the power of the executive. By the decree which passed on his motion, the government of France was declared revolutionary till peace ; and the executive council, the ministers, the generals, the whole constituted bodies, were placed under the direction of the Committee of Public Salvation, which was to render an account of its proceedings every eight days to the Convention. The revolutionary laws were to be executed rapidly ; the government was to correspond directly with the districts ; all the generals were to be nominated by the Con-

vention, on the recommendation of the Committee of Public Salvation. The grain produced in every district was to be calculated, the amount needed for the subsistence of its inhabitants ascertained, and the remainder subjected to requisition for the public service. Paris was to be provisioned in this way for a year. A revolutionary army was to be raised to enforce these requisitions, and repress all counter-revolutionary movements, which was to be under the direction of the Committee of Public Salvation ; a new court was to be established, named by the Convention, to punish embezzlers of the public money, and make public officers render an account of their fortunes. It may safely be affirmed that this decree, coupled with that of suspected persons which had been passed a few weeks before, vested more absolute power in the Committee of Public Salvation than had ever before been wielded by any government upon earth.¹

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1793.

¹ Decree,
Oct. 10.
Hist. Parl.
xxix. 173,
174.

Meanwhile the prisons of Paris exhibited an extraordinary spectacle. Filled at once with ordinary malefactors, and with all that yet remained of dignity, beauty, or virtue in the Republic, they presented the most unparalleled assemblage that modern Europe had yet seen of unblushing guilt and unbending virtue, of dignified manners and revolutionary vulgarity, of splendid talent and frightful atrocity. In some, where the rich were allowed to provide for their own comforts, a singular degree of affluence and even elegance for some time prevailed ; in others, the most noble captives were weeping on a couch of straw, with no other covering than a few filthy rags. The French character, imbued beyond any other in Europe with elasticity, and capability to endure misfortunes, in many instances rose superior to all the horrors with which the jails were surrounded. From the multitude and lustre of their fellow-sufferers, every one felt his own calamities sensibly softened. By degrees the ordinary interests of life began to exert their influence even on the verge of the tomb. Poetry enchanted the

23.
Extraordin-
ary spec-
tacle pre-
sented by
the prisons
of Paris.

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crowded cells by touching strains, eloquence exerted its fascinating ascendant, beauty cast around its silken chains. The female captives of rank became attentive to their dress ; intimacies and attachments were formed ; and, amidst all the agitation and agony consequent on their protracted sufferings, the excitements of a happier existence were felt even to the foot of the scaffold. By degrees, as the prosecutions became more frequent, and numbers were daily led out to execution, the sense of common danger united them in the bonds of the strongest affection ; they rejoiced and wept together ; and the constant thinning of their number produced a sympathy among the survivors, which outlived every other feeling of existence.¹

¹ Tableau des Prisons de Paris, i. 16, 24. Riouffe, 46, 51, 60, 68, Th. v. 362, 364.

24.
Trial of General Custine. Aug. 13.

General Custine, who commanded the army of Flanders at the time of the capture of Valenciennes by the English, was denounced by the agents of the Convention, and shortly after brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal, charged with having entered into treacherous correspondence with the Allies, and of having been the means of causing Frankfort, Mayence, and Valenciennes, to fall into the hands of the enemy. When the state of the armies, described in the report already quoted by St Just, is considered, it will not be deemed surprising that disasters befell the forces of the Republic. The only thing really surprising is, that France was not conquered. The prosecutors entirely failed in adducing any satisfactory evidence against him. His beautiful and gifted daughter-in-law in vain sat daily by his side, and exerted herself to the utmost in his behalf ; General Baraguay d'Hilliers, with generous courage, supported him by his military knowledge and experience. Her grace, and the obvious injustice of the accusation, produced some impression on the judges, and a few inclined to an acquittal ; immediately the Revolutionary Tribunal itself was complained of at the Jacobin Club.²

² Bull. du Trib. Rév. Nos. 83, 84. Hist. Parl. xxviii. 254, 259.

"It gives me great pain," said Hébert, at that great

centre of the Revolution, “to be obliged to denounce an authority which was the hope of the patriots, and hitherto has so well deserved their confidence. But the Revolutionary Tribunal is on the point of absolving a guilty person, in favour of whom the beauties of Paris are moving heaven and earth. The daughter of Custine, as skilful an actress in this city as her father was at the head of the armies, solicits every one on his behalf.” Robespierre made some cutting remarks on the spirit of chicanery and form which had taken possession of the Tribunal, and strongly advocated his condemnation. The municipality of Paris, on the motion of Hébert, passed a decree prohibiting the fair supplicants (*jolies intrigantes*) from obtaining entrance to any of the jails or police-offices. The consequences were decisive; General Custine was at length found guilty, and condemned amidst the rapturous applause of the Jacobins and Cordeliers, who filled the court. Young Madame Custine narrowly escaped death, in consequence of the noble part she had taken in his defence. When she appeared on the stair on leaving the court, a savage cry arose in the mob; the vociferations of the people, and their gestures, showed they were preparing to murder her on the spot. If she had sunk down, she would have been instantly torn in pieces; even the appearance of faltering would have proved fatal. Uncertain whether to advance or recede, she hesitated a moment, and the people were just springing forward to seize her, when an unknown woman in the crowd secretly pressed her hand, and taking the child, which she carried in her arms, from her breast, gave it to her with the words, “Return it at the bottom of the stair.” She did so, and, protected by the infant citizen, escaped unhurt, and gave back the child; but she never saw her deliverer more.* Custine was sent to the scaffold, and, though shaken for

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1793.

25.
Denunciation of the
Jolies intrigantes at
the Jacobins
and the Convention.

Aug. 27.

* This curious incident is perfectly authenticated.—See *La Russie en 1839*, par Marquis CUSTINE, i. 39—the son of the person thus marvellously saved.

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XIV.

1793.

¹ Lac. xi.
296, 297,
299. Toul.
iv. 62, 131.
Th. v. 297.
Bull. du
Trib. Rév.
No. 95, p.
390. Hist.
Parl. xxviii.
417.

a moment, died firmly. The crowd murmured because he appeared on the fatal chariot with a minister of religion by his side, and knelt to pray on the steps of the scaffold before he ascended. General Houchard, the second in command, who had denounced Custine, notwithstanding his recent success over the Allies at Hondschoote, shortly after shared the same fate; and Baraguay d'Hilliers, reserved for higher destinies, was sent to prison, from whence he was only delivered by the fall of Robespierre.¹

26.

Situation of
Marie An-
toinette.

Marie Antoinette was the next victim. Since the death of the King, his unfortunate family had been closely confined in the Temple; the Princesses had themselves discharged all the duties of menial servants to the Queen and the Dauphin. A project had been formed, with every appearance of success, for her escape: she at first listened to the proposal, but, on the evening before it was to be carried into execution, declared her resolution never to separate from her son. "Whatever pleasure it would give me," said she, "to escape from this place, I cannot consent to be separated from him. I can feel no enjoyment without my children: with them I can regret nothing." Even in the solitude of her confinement, the cares of his education were sedulously attended to; and the mind of the young King already comprehended the duties of royalty. The Revolution of 31st May, however, was felt in its full severity by the prisoners in the Temple, as well as all the other captives in France. Hébert insisted that the family of the tyrant should not be better treated than a family of Sans-culottes; and he obtained a decree from the magistrates, by which every species of luxury was withdrawn. Their fare was reduced to the humblest kind; oil wicker lamps became their only light, and their dress the coarsest habiliments. He himself soon after visited the Temple, and took from the unhappy prisoners even the little movables on which their only comfort depended. Nothing was found tend-

ing to inculcate them, but that did not alleviate the severity of their treatment; from the Queen they took a stick of sealing-wax, from the Princess-Royal a prayer for France. They carried off, "as a suspicious article," soon after, the last hat worn by Louis, which the Queen was striving to preserve as a relic. Eighty-four louis, which the Princess Elizabeth had received from the Princess Lamballe, and which she had hitherto concealed, could not elude this rigorous search, and were taken away.¹

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1793.

¹ Duchesse
d'Angou-
lême, 17.
Lac. x. 296.
Th. v. 369.

Soon the barbarity of the government envied the widowed and captive Queen even the pleasure of beholding her son. The discovery of an abortive conspiracy for their liberation was made the ground for separating the Dauphin from his mother, and delivering him to the inhuman Simon, the agent and friend of Robespierre. In vain the young prince demanded to see the decree which authorised this cruel separation. His mother, weeping, resisted for above an hour, with the little boy clinging to her neck; but at length she was forced to let him go by the threat of instantly putting him to death. When removed, this poor child remained two days without taking nourishment. After he was for ever withdrawn from her sight, his beautiful fair locks, which still fell in profuse curls over his shoulders, were cut off, he was dressed in coarse garments, and compelled to wear the *bonnet rouge*, and the pantaloons and coat which composed the dress called "*à la Carmagnole*."

27.
Cruel treat-
ment of the
Dauphin.

All the cruel treatment of Simon, however, could not extinguish the native generosity of his disposition. "Capet," said he, "if the Vendéans were to succeed in delivering you, and placing you on the throne, what would you do with me?"—"I would pardon you," replied the infant monarch. "What am I to do with the child?" said Simon to the Committee of Public Salvation:—"Banish him?" "No."—"Kill him?" "No."—"Poison him?" "No."—"What then?"²

² Lac. x.
230, 233.
Th. v. 376.
Duchesse
d'Angou-
lême, 16,
17, 26.

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XIV.

1793.

"*Get quit of him.*" These instructions were too faithfully executed. By depriving him of air, exercise, and wholesome food, by keeping him in a continual state of squalid filth, the unfortunate child was at length brought, during the next year, to his grave, without imposing upon his keepers the necessity of actual violence.

28.
Decree of
the Conven-
tion on the
motion of
Barère for
the trial of
the Queen.

On the 1st August the design of destroying the Queen was for the first time brought forward in the Convention. The Committee of Public Salvation had been divided on the step. Robespierre resisted it; but Barère, Billaud Varennes, and the party who ultimately destroyed him, carried the point against his opposition. "How," said Barère, "do the enemies of the Republic still hope for success? Is it because we have too long forgotten the crimes of the Austrian? Is it because we have shown so strange an indulgence to the race of our ancient tyrants? It is time that this unwise apathy should cease—it is time to extirpate from the soil of the Republic the last roots of royalty. As for the children of Louis the conspirator, they are hostages for the Republic. The charge of their maintenance shall be reduced to what is necessary for the sustenance of two individuals. But behind them lurks a woman, who has been the cause of all the disasters of France, whose share in every project adverse to France has long been known. National justice claims her as its own. It is to the Tribunal appointed for the trial of conspirators that we must send her. It is thus alone that you can make Francis and George, Charles and William, sensible of the crimes which their ministers have committed." In pursuance of these views, he proposed that Marie Antoinette should be forthwith sent to the Conciergerie, separated from her family, and brought to trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal; and that all the members of the house of Capet, with the exception of the two children in confinement, should be banished the French territory.¹ A decree in these terms, like all the other

¹ *Moniteur*,
2, 7, and 9
Août
O'Meara, ii.
170.

decrees at this time, passed unanimously, without any debate.*

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On the 2d August the Queen was torn from her weeping sister and daughter, and confined alone in the prison of the Conciergerie, the most rigorous of the many rigorous places of confinement at that time known in Paris. A narrow, gloomy, and damp apartment, a worn mattress, and a bed of straw, constituted the sole accommodations of one for whom the splendour of Versailles once seemed hardly adequate. She was detained there above two months in the closest confinement; her mild and heroic demeanour interested even the wife of the jailer on her behalf. Night and day a guard of gendarmes was kept in her small and wretched cell. But the fidelity of her devoted adherents won over these guardians of the municipality; some faithful friends visited her there, and a courageous priest, M. l'Abbe Magnien, at the hazard of his life, often administered to her the sacrament, which she received with the most devout gratitude.† Madame de Stael published a pamphlet, in which, with generous eloquence, she urged the impolicy, as well as injustice, of further severity against the royal family. "Women of France," she concluded, "I appeal to you: your empire is over, if ferocity continues to reign; your destinies are gone, if your tears fall in vain. Defend, then, the Queen, by the arms which nature has given you:¹ Seek the infant, who will perish if bereaved of his mother, and must become the object of painful interest, from the unheard-of

1793.
29.
Queen sent
to the Con-
ciergerie.
Aug. 2.

¹ Duchesse
d'Angou-
lême, 28, 30.
Lac. x. 239,
241, 249.
De Stael,
Réflexions
sur le Pro-
cès de la
Reine.
(Œuvres,
xvi. 32.

* "Robespierre," said Napoleon, "was by no means the worst character who figured in the Revolution. He *opposed trying the Queen*. He was not an atheist, like many of his colleagues. He was a fanatic, a monster; but incorruptible, incapable of robbing or putting to death from personal enmity. He was an enthusiast, who really believed he was doing right."—O'MEARA, ii. 170.

† "Je certifie de plus que dans le moi, d'Octobre 1793, j'ai eu le bonheur de pénétrer à la Conciergerie avec Mademoiselle Fouché, d'y confesser plusieurs fois la Reine, Marie Antoinette, et de lui dire la messe et la communier. MAGNIEN, 4 Avril 1834."—See ALFRED NETTEMENT, *Etudes Critiques sur les Girondins*, 78, 79.

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calamities which have befallen him. Let him ask on his knees the life of his mother : childhood can pray ; it can pray, when as yet it knows not the calamity which it would avert." But her efforts were in vain. On the 14th October Marie Antoinette was brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal.

30.
Trial of
the Queen.
Oct. 14.

An immense crowd assembled to witness her trial. The spectacle of a QUEEN being tried by her subjects was as yet new in the history of the world. The populace, how much soever accustomed to sanguinary scenes, were strongly excited by this event. Sorrow and confinement had whitened her once beautiful hair ; her figure and air still commanded the admiration of all who beheld her ; her cheeks, pale and emaciated, were occasionally tinged with a vivid colour, at the mention of those she had lost. Out of deference to her husband's memory, rather than from her own inclination, she pleaded to the court. Their interrogatories were of no avail ; her answers, like those of the King, were clear, distinct, and unequivocal. As the form of examining witnesses was necessary, the prosecutors called the Count d'Estaing, who commanded the military at Versailles on the 5th October 1789. But though the Queen had been his political opponent, he had too high a sense of honour to tell anything but the truth, and spoke only of her heroism on that trying occasion, and the noble resolution she had expressed in his presence to die with her husband, rather than obtain life by leaving him. Manuel, notwithstanding his hostility to the court during the Legislative Assembly, declared he could not depone to one fact against the accused. The venerable Bailly was next brought in : he now beheld the fruits of his democratic enthusiasm, and wept when he saw the Queen. When asked if he knew "the *woman* Capet," he turned with a melancholy air to his sovereign, and profoundly bowing his head, said, "Yes, I know *Madame*." He then declared that he could say nothing against her, and that

all the pretended accounts extracted from the young prince, relative to the journey to Varennes, were false. The Jacobins were furious at his testimony, and, from the violence of their language, he easily anticipated the fate which they reserved for himself. Recourse was then had to the testimony of other witnesses. The monsters Hébert and Simon were examined; but what they had to declare amounted to nothing but proofs of the piety and affectionate disposition of the Queen and the Princess Elizabeth. At last Hébert deponed * that the Dauphin had informed him that he had been initiated into improper practices by his mother; the Queen, overwhelmed with horror at the atrocious falsehood, remained silent. A jurymen having insisted that she should answer, "If I have not hitherto spoken," said she, "it is because nature refused to answer to such an accusation, brought against a mother." Turning to the audience with inexpressible dignity, she added—"I appeal to all the mothers who hear me, whether such a thing is possible." ¹

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XIV.

1793.

¹ Bull. du
Trib. Rév.
No. 24, 25,
pp. 95, 98.
Hist. Parl.
xxix. 354,
372. Lac.
x, 250, 251.
Th. v. 3, 4,
375.

"Abash'd the Devil stood,
And felt how awful goodness is; and saw
Virtue in her shape how lovely—saw and pined
His loss: but chiefly to find here observed
His lustre visibly impair'd; yet seem'd
Undaunted." †

It was of no avail; notwithstanding the eloquent and courageous defence of her counsel, she was condemned.

At four on the morning of the day of her execution,

* The chief facts deponed to by Hébert were—"Qu'il a trouvé un livre d'église à elle appartenant, dans lequel était un de ces signes contre-révolutionnaires, consistant en un cœur enflammé, traversé par une flèche, sur lequel était écrit, 'Jesu, miserere nobis.' Une autre fois il trouva dans la chambre d'Elizabeth un chapeau qui fut reconnu pour avoir appartenu à Louis Capet: cette découverte ne lui permit plus de douter qu'il existât parmi ses collègues quelques hommes dans le cas de se dégrader au point de servir la tyrannie. * * * Qu'il n'y avait pas même à douter, par ce que dit le fils Capet, qu'il n'y eût un acte incestueux entre la mère et le fils," [a child of eight years old !]—*Bulletin du Tribunal Révolutionnaire*, No. 24, p. 95, 96; and *Hist. Parl.* xxix. 354, 355.

† *Paradise Lost*, iv. 845.

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1793.

31.

Her last
letter to the
Princess
Elizabeth.

she wrote a letter to the Princess Elizabeth, worthy to be placed beside the testament of Louis. "To you, my sister," said she, "I address myself for the last time. I have been condemned, not to an ignominious death; it is so only to the guilty; but to rejoin your brother. Innocent, like him, I hope to emulate his firmness at the last hour. I weep only for my children: I hope that one day, when they have regained their rank, they may be reunited to you, and feel the blessing of your tender care. Let them ever recollect what I have never ceased to inculcate, that a scrupulous discharge of duty is the only foundation of a good life; friendship and mutual confidence its best consolation. May my son never forget the last words of his father, which I now repeat from myself—*Never to attempt to revenge our death*. I die true to the Catholic religion—the faith of my fathers, which I have never ceased to profess. Deprived of all spiritual consolation, I can only seek for pardon from Heaven. I ask forgiveness of all who know me; from you, in an especial manner, my sister, for all the pain I may have involuntarily given you. I pray for forgiveness to all my enemies for the evil they have done; and I now bid farewell to my aunts, brothers, and sisters. I have had friends: the idea of being separated from them is one of the greatest regrets I feel in dying. Let them know that in my last moments I thought of them. Adieu! my good and tender sister! may this letter reach you. Think ever of me; and I embrace you with all my heart, as well as those poor and dear infants. My God! how heart-rending it is to quit them for ever! Adieu! adieu! I am now to bid farewell to all but my religious duties." ¹ *

¹ Duchesse
d'Angou-
lême, 134.
Lac. x. 259.

When led out for execution, she was dressed in white. She had cut off her hair with her own hands. Placed in

* The authenticity of this letter is placed beyond a doubt. It was taken as soon as written to Robespierre; found after his death among his papers by Courtois, and discovered among the latter's papers in 1815, when these were searched by order of government. A fac-simile of it is annexed to the Duchesse d'Angoulême's narrative.—See *Biographie Universelle*, xxvii. 83 (MARIE ANTOINETTE.)

a chariot, with her arms tied behind her back, she was conducted by a long circuit to the place of execution, which was on the Place de la Révolution,* where her husband had perished. A constitutional priest was seated by her side. Thirty thousand armed men lined the streets, and ten times that number gazed on the spectacle. Her air, like that of Charlotte Corday, was calm and serene. She spoke little, but gazed with an expression of interest on the numerous revolutionary names and signs which had so altered the character of the metropolis since she last saw it. When the chariot stopped in the Place Louis XV., she turned her eyes to the Tuileries, once the scene of her joys, and a bright flush suffused her countenance, which soon gave place to the former pallid hue. The people, roused by revolutionary emissaries, raised savage shouts of joy as she moved along; the Queen, with a serene look, indicating pity rather than suffering, bore that last expression of popular fury. When the procession reached the fatal spot in the centre of the Place Louis XV., she ascended with a firm step the scaffold, and at the top of the stair trod accidentally on the foot of the executioner. "Pardon me, sir," said she; "I did not do it intentionally."† Her last words were, "O God! pardon my enemies. Farewell, my beloved children! I am about to join your father!" She then calmly resigned herself to the executioners: her countenance was illuminated by an expression of Christian hope; and the daughter of the Cæsars died with a firmness that did honour to her race.¹

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32.

Her execution.
Oct. 16.

¹ Bull. du Trib. Rév. No. 33, p. 128. Prudhomme. Rév. de Paris. Lac. x. 261. Toul. iv. 107. Th. v. 337. Duval, Souv. de la Terreur, iv. 68.

Thus perished, at the age of thirty-nine, Marie Antoinette.

* Now the Place Louis XV.

† "En montant à l'échafaud, Marie Antoinette mit par mégarde le pied sur celui du citoyen Samson, et l'exécuteur des jugemens en ressentit assez de douleur pour s'écrier, 'Ah!' Elle se retourna en lui disant, 'Monsieur, je vous demande excuse: je ne l'ai pas fait exprès.'" Prudhomme's account of the execution of the Queen is far the most minute; and as he was a furious Republican, and ally of Danton's, it is liable to no suspicion.—See PRUDHOMME'S *Révolutions de Paris*, No. 212, p. 97.—This incident attracted so much notice, that it formed the subject of an engraving executed at the time, and with these words at its foot.

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33.

Her character.

¹ Plutarch
in Solon.² Toul. iv.
108, 109.

ette, Queen of France. Called in early life to the first throne in Europe, surrounded by a splendid court and a flattering nobility, blessed with an affectionate husband and promising family, she seemed to have approached, as nearly as the uncertainty of life will admit, to the limits of human felicity. She died, after years of suffering and anguish, broken by captivity, subdued by misfortune, bereft of her children, degraded from her throne, on the scaffold, where recently before her husband had perished. History has not recorded a more terrible instance of reverse of fortune, or one more illustrative of the wisdom of the ancient saying, "that none should be pronounced happy till the day of his death."¹ * Her character has come comparatively pure and unsullied out of the revolutionary furnace. An affectionate daughter and a faithful wife, she preserved in the two most corrupted courts of Europe the simplicity and affections of domestic life. If in early youth her indiscretion and familiarity were such as prudence would condemn, in later years her spirit and magnanimity were such as justice must admire. She was more fitted for the storms of adversity than the sunshine of prosperity. Sometimes ambitious and overbearing in the earlier years of her reign, it was the sufferings of her later days that drew forth the nobler parts of her character. The worthy descendant of Maria Theresa, she would have died in the field combating her enemies, rather than live on the throne subject to their control. Years of misfortune quenched her spirit, but did not lessen her courage; in the solitude of the Temple, she discharged, with exemplary fidelity, every duty to her husband and her children, and bore a reverse of fortune, unparalleled even in that age of calamity, with a heroism that never was surpassed.²

Her marriage to Louis was considered at the time as

* The same sentiment is finely expressed by Euripides—

“Χρὴ δ’ οὐποτ’ εἰπεῖν οὐδεν ὀλβιον βροτῶν,
Πρὶν ἂν θανόντος τὴν τελευταὴν ἴδῃς
ὅπως περσας ἡμερὰν ἔξει κατω.”

EURIPIDES, *Andromache*, 100-102.

a masterstroke in politics. A long alliance between the rival monarchies was anticipated from the propitious union which seemed to unite their destinies. It led to a war more terrible than any which had yet shaken these powers ; to the repeated capture of both capitals by hostile armies ; to mutual exasperation unprecedented between their people. So uncertain are the conclusions of political wisdom, when founded on personal interests or connections, and not on the great and permanent principles which govern human affairs. The manners of the Queen accelerated the Revolution : her foreign descent exasperated the public discontent ; her undeserved death was one means of bringing about its punishment. The justice of Heaven did not slumber. Slow, but sure, came the hour of Germany's revenge. On the day twenty years from that on which she ascended the scaffold, commenced the fatal rout of France on the field of Leipsic.*

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34.

Fatal effects
of her alli-
ance with
Louis.

On the day of the execution of the Queen, Barère regaled Robespierre, St Just, and some others of their party, at a tavern. Robespierre condemned the proceedings against the Queen, and, in particular, Hébert's monstrous evidence, with so much vehemence that he broke his plate during the violence of his gesticulation. But Barère and the others defended the proceedings, and announced more extensive plans of carnage. "The vessel of the Revolution," said he, "cannot be wafted into port but on waves of blood. We must begin with the members of the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies. That rubbish must be swept away."¹

35.

Singular
banquet of
Robespierre
and Barère.¹ Hist. Parl.
xxviii. 124.

This intention was not long of being carried into effect. The Decemvirs forthwith proceeded to destroy their former friends and the earliest supporters of the Revolution. Bailly, mayor of Paris, and president of the Assembly on occasion of the celebrated Jeu-de-Paume, was arrested, and brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal. His profound and eloquent scientific researches, his great

36.

Arrest and
death of
Bailly.
Nov. 11.

* On Oct. 16, 1813. She died Oct. 16, 1793.

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services in the cause of liberty, his enlightened philanthropy, pleaded in vain before that sanguinary court. The recollection of the Champ-de-Mars, of the red flag, and the courageous stand which he had made with Lafayette against the fury of the multitude, as well as his recent refusal to depone against Marie Antoinette at her trial, were present to the minds of his prosecutors. The witnesses adduced spoke against him with an unusual degree of asperity. His last words to the court were—"I have ever executed the law : I will know how to obey it, since you are its organ." He was condemned to die, and in his case, as he had foreseen, a refinement of cruelty was employed. He was first brought to the common place of execution in the Place Louis XV.; but when there, the mob, with savage yells, insisted he should be taken to the Champ-de-Mars, as the place where he had first hoisted the flag of defiance to revolutionary atrocity. Thither he was accordingly led ; the guillotine was taken down, and an immense crowd of vindictive Jacobins, among whom was a large proportion of women, and persons whom he had saved from famine during his mayoralty, followed to witness his death. On foot, in the most dreadful weather, the unhappy victim was led behind the guillotine during a tedious passage of three hours, from the Place Louis XV. to the place finally fixed on for his execution on the Champ-de-Mars, near the river, opposite Chaillot. The passage was interrupted by repeated halts at stations to prolong its agony. During its continuance he frequently fell, from the violence to which he was exposed : he was assailed with hisses and pelted with mud ; and the first President of the Assembly received several inhuman blows on the face and body from the populace. At the Champ-de-Mars, the red flag, emblematic of the martial law which he had authorised, was burned over his head, and he was there compelled to kneel down and kiss the ground where the blood of the patriots had been shed. He was led

again on foot, amidst a drenching fall of snow and sleet, to the banks of the river, where, to parody the scene on Calvary, the heavy beams which support the guillotine were placed on his shoulders. He sank under the weight, but barbarous blows obliged him again to lift it. He fell a second time, and swooned away ; yells of laughter arose in the crowd, and the execution was postponed till he revived, and could feel its bitterness. But nothing could subdue his courage. "You tremble, Bailly," said one of the spectators. "My friend," said the old man, "it is only from cold."¹

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¹ Lam. Hist.
des Gir. vii.
272, 273.
Bull. du
Trib. Rév.
No. 81, p.
322. Lac.
x. 292. Th.
x. 394, 396,
397. Toul.
iv. 130.
Biog. Univ.
iii. 242, 243.
Deux Amis,
xi. 249.

The eloquent Barnave, one of the most upright members of the Constituent Assembly, was soon after condemned, notwithstanding a defence by himself of unrivalled pathos and ability. Duport Dutertre, formerly minister of Louis XVI., on the same day shared the same fate. Condorcet had fled when the lists of proscription were first prepared by the victors on the 2d June ; for eight months he was concealed in Paris, and employed the tedious hours of solitude in composing his celebrated "Esquisse des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain," a work in which much learning is illustrated by fervid eloquence ; and the warm but visionary anticipations of future improvement were indulged, amidst the deepest circumstances of present disaster. In gratitude to the hostess who had sheltered him, he wrote a poem, containing a sentiment descriptive of the feelings of his party during those melancholy times—

37.
Of Barnave
and Condor-
cet.
Oct. 29.

"Choisi d'être oppresseur ou victime,
J'embrassai le malheur et leur laissai le crime."

Terrified by the numerous lists of persons condemned for concealing the proscribed, he declared to his generous protector his resolution to leave her. "I must not remain any longer with you ; I am *hors la loi*."—"But we," replied she, "are not *hors de l'humanité*." The return of spring awoke intensely his desire to see again the fields, the green leaves, the flowers.² He set out.

² Bull. du
Trib. Rév.
No. 72. Th.
ix. 286, 287.
Deux Amis,
xi. 21, 22.

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accordingly disguised as a common labourer. At the village of Clamart, the fineness of his linen awakened the suspicion of his landlady, who had him arrested and sent to prison, where next morning he was found dead from the effects of a speedy poison, which, like many others in those days of terror, he constantly carried about his person.

38.
Trial of the
Duke of
Orleans.

The Duke of Orleans, the early and interested instigator of the Revolution, was its next victim. Billaud Varennes said in the Convention—"The time has come when all the conspirators should be known and struck. I demand that we no longer pass over in silence a man whom we seem to have forgot, despite the numerous facts which depone against him. I demand that d'Orleans be sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal, with the other conspirators." Loud applauses followed these words; and Robespierre immediately added—"There can be no one so blind as not to be enlightened by the flames of Lyons and Marseilles, which the conspirators have lighted; or so deaf as not to hear the cries of the patriots massacred in La Vendée, Belgium, and Toulon; wherever, in short, that execrable faction have possessed any influence. I demand that we instantly proceed to the vote." The Convention, once his hireling adulators, unanimously supported the proposal. In vain he alleged his accession to the disorders of the 5th October, his support of the revolt of the 10th August, his vote against the King on the 17th January. His condemnation was speedily pronounced.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxviii. 176,
177.

39.
His execu-
tion.

He demanded only one favour, which was granted, that his execution should be postponed for twenty-four hours. In the interval, he had a repast prepared with care, on which he feasted with more than usual avidity. When led out to execution, he gazed for a time, with a smile on his countenance, on the Palais Royal, the scene of his former orgies. He was detained above a quarter of an hour in front of that palace by order of Robespierre, who had in vain asked his daughter's hand in marriage,

and had promised, if he would relent in that extremity, to excite a tumult which would save his life. Depraved as he was, he had too much honourable feeling left to consent to such a sacrifice, and remained in expectation of death, without giving the expected signal of acquiescence, for twenty minutes, when he was permitted to continue his journey to the scaffold. He met his fate with stoical fortitude ; and it is pleasing to have to record one redeeming trait at the close of a life stained by so much selfish passion and guilty ambition—he preferred death to sacrificing his daughter to the tyrant. Never was more strongly exemplified the effect of materialism and infidelity, in rendering men callous to futurity, and degrading a naturally noble disposition. The multitude applauded his execution ; not a voice was raised in his favour, though it was mainly composed of the very men who had been instigated by his adulators and fed by his extravagance. The destruction of Bailly, Barnave, and the Duke of Orleans, annihilated the party attached to a constitutional monarchy. The early objects of the Revolution were thus frustrated, its first supporters destroyed by the passions they had awakened among the people. The overthrow of the Girondists extinguished the hope of a republic ; the massacre of the Constitutionals, that of a limited monarchy. The prophecy of Vergniaud was rapidly approaching its accomplishment : the Revolution, like Saturn, was successively devouring all its progeny.¹

These sanguinary proceedings were followed by a measure as unnecessary as it was barbarous—the violation of the tombs of St Denis, and the profanation of the sepulchres of the kings of France. By a decree of the Convention, on 3d August, these venerable asylums of departed greatness were ordered to be destroyed*—a measure never adopted by the English parliament during

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¹ Hist. de la
Conv. iii.
180. Lac.
xi, 289, 290.
Toul. iv.
121, 122.

* “ Les tombeaux et mausolées des ci-devant rois, élevés dans l’église de St Denis, dans le Temple, et autres lieux dans toute l’étendue de la République, seront détruits le 10 Août prochain.”—*Décret*, 3 Août 1793. *Hist. Parl.* xxviii. 397.

^{40.}
Violation of
the tombs of
St Denis.
Destruction
of monu-
ments over
all France.

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the frenzy of the Fifth Monarchy men ; and which proves that political frenzy will push its votaries to greater extremities than religious fanaticism. A furious multitude, headed by the revolutionary army, precipitated itself out of Paris ; the tombs of Henry IV., of Francis I., and of Louis XII., were ransacked, and their bones scattered in the air. Even the glorious name of Turenne could not protect his grave from spoliation. His remains were found almost undecayed, as when he received the fatal wound on the banks of the Lech. The bones of Charles V., the saviour of his country, were dispersed. At his feet was discovered the coffin of the faithful Du Guesclin, and French hands profaned the skeleton of him before whom English invasion had rolled back. Most of these tombs proved to be strongly secured. Much time, and no small exertion of skill and labour, was required to burst their barriers. They would have resisted for ever the decay of time or the violence of enemies ; they yielded to the fury of domestic dissension.¹

¹ Lac. x.
264, 265,
and Pr. Hist.
ii. 142.
Châteaub.
Etud. Hist.,
iv. 169.

41.
Particulars
of the spolia-
tion of the
tombs.
Oct. 12.

There is something solemn and interesting in the opening of the tombs of the departed great. It carries us back at once to far distant ages : the corpses in their grave-clothes, with their features sometimes unchanged, are revealed to the view ; it seems as if the awful scene of the day of judgment had arrived, when the graves shall be opened and the dead arise. The measures of the French Revolutionists displayed, beyond all former example among men, this terrible spectacle. By a decree of the municipality of Paris, on the 12th October, it was ordered that all graves should be carefully searched, in order to discover and bring to the public treasury any jewels, gold, silver, bronze, or even lead, that might be found. This order, joined to the rapacity of the searchers, and the fanatical zeal of the people, caused the tombs of the kings and paladins at St Denis to be ransacked with unparalleled eagerness. But immense labour was required to effect an entrance. The magnificent doors of bronze,

the gift of Charlemagne, which guarded the entrance, long resisted their efforts, but at length yielded to repeated blows of prodigious sledge-hammers, and were nearly shivered to pieces. One of the first tombs rifled was that of Pepin, father of that great conqueror. All the other mausoleums were opened and ransacked in succession : the vast floor of the dark subterraneous church was covered with the bones of kings, mingled with the broken fragments of their marble sepulchres. The arms and the heads of Louis XII. and Francis I. were severed and heaped in a corner of the church. The monuments of Turenne and Du Guesclin were demolished and ruined. The abomination of desolation had penetrated every part of the cemetery.¹

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¹ Duval,
Souv. de la
Terreur, v.
32, 46.

One of the tombs bore date so early as 580 ; it was that of Dagobert, son of Childeric, king of France. Nearly the whole sepulchres of the first race of kings were destroyed in a few hours. Those of the Bourbon family, from their more costly construction, required a longer time for their demolition. But it was at last effected, and the dead in their grave-clothes were drawn forth. The body of Henry IV. was so entire that it was instantly recognised from the prints by the spectators : a fragrant perfume, when the lid was removed from the coffin, filled the air, from aromatic substances in the interior of the skull, but as the grave-clothes were removed, the two deep fissures made by the dagger of Ravillac still yawned almost as clean as when the wounds were received in the side. The venerable remains were at first the object of general respect ; but, on the 14th, a Jacobin orator, Javoignes, roused the people by harangues ; they tore the body in pieces, and cast the fragments into a vast ditch, filled with corpses and quicklime, where they were mixed with all the others, and irrecoverably lost. The body of Louis XIII. was still entire, but completely dried up ; that of Louis XIV. nothing but a putrid mass, which emitted a fetid exhalation. His remains had come

42.
State in
which the
bodies of
the kings
were found.

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to the nothingness so often foretold in his presence by Massillon and Bossuet, when surrounded by the pomp of Versailles. The body of Louis XV. was found at the entrance of the tomb, according to custom, till his successor occupied his place, when the former king was removed to the vault. It exhibited so hideous a mass of putrefaction, that when the lid was removed from the coffin the pestilential exhalation filled the whole Abbey, and was even felt in the adjoining houses. To purify the air, discharges of musketry were fired around the Abbey: they were heard in Paris at the very moment that the head of Marie Antoinette fell on the scaffold, in the Place Louis XV.¹

¹ Duval, iv.
41, 49, 68.

43.
Bodies of
Du Guesclin
and Tu-
renne.

All the bodies found there, kings, queens, and heroes, were thrown into a vast trench, and destroyed by quicklime. The body of Du Guesclin was lost in this way. That of Turenne alone escaped, not from any reverence for his memory, but from the fortunate circumstance that, after it had been ordered to be thrown into the common tomb, two of the officers of the Museum of Natural History requested to have it, as being a "well preserved mummy," which might be of service to the science of comparative anatomy.* It was delivered to them accordingly, and carried to the Jardin des Plantes, where it lay for nine years in a store-room, between the skeletons of a monkey and a camel. In 1802, however, Napoleon heard of the circumstance, and had the body of the illustrious warrior removed to the church of the Invalides, where it now reposes beside his own mortal remains.² After the tombs had all been ransacked, and the bodies thrown into the common trench, where they were destroyed by quicklime, the whole jewellery, plate, and

Oct. 13.
² Prudhom.
Rév. de
Paris, No.
215, p. 216.
Duval, iv.
68, 78.

* "L'ordre avait été déjà donné de transporter le corps de Turenne au dépôt général des autres cadavres, lorsque deux administrateurs du Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle réclamèrent le corps de ce grand homme, comme une momie bien conservée qui pourrait servir aux progrès de l'anatomie comparée. On le deposa dans un grénier, où il est resté neuf ans entre le squelette d'un singe et celui d'un chameau!"—DUVAL, *Souvenirs de la Terreur*, iv. 74.

treasures, found in the treasury of St Denis, and all the other churches in France, as well as what had been extracted from the tombs, were brought in great pomp to the Convention, where they were poured out in confusion on the floor, amidst deafening acclamations of "Vive la République."*

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This was immediately followed by a general attack upon the monuments and remains of antiquity throughout all France. The sepulchres of the great of past times, of the barons and generals of the feudal ages, of the paladins, and of the crusaders, were involved in one undistinguishable ruin. It seemed as if the glories of antiquity were forgotten, or sought to be buried in oblivion. The skulls of monarchs and heroes were tossed about like footballs by the profane multitude; they made a jest of the lips before which nations had trembled. Nothing could equal the fury with which the populace, in the greater part of France, threw themselves on the monumental remains in the churches. It would seem as if their rage at the dead was even greater than their exasperation at the living. Hardly any monuments of note escaped dilapidation. This devastation was much more complete than in Scotland during the fury of the Reformation; for there the images and monasteries only were destroyed—the graves were not rifled. The monumental remains which had escaped their sacrilegious fury, were subsequently collected by order of the Directory, and placed in a great museum at Paris, in the Rue Petits Augustins, where they long remained piled and heaped together in broken confusion—an emblem of the Revolution, which destroyed in a few years what centuries of glory had erected.¹

44.
Destruction
of monu-
ments over
all France.

¹ Personal
observation.
Deux Amis,
xi. 53.

* "Chaque section de Paris, et des communes voisines, se fait un honneur d'aller déposer sur l'autel de la patrie les dépouilles opimes de la superstition; et la Convention ne sait ce qu'elle a le plus à admirer, ou la magnificence des dons, ou le zèle du patriotisme. Tout Paris et les communes voisines sont décatholisés. Qui pourrait compter les immenses richesses de Brunelle et de Franciade ci-devant St Denis—tout ce pompeux amas de hochets ridicules qu'avait enfouis dans les églises la stupidité de nos rois."—PRUDHOMME, *Révolutions de Paris*, No. 215, p. 213.

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45.

Abjuration
of Christi-
anity by the
municipa-
lity.
Nov. 7.

Having massacred the great of the present, and insulted the illustrious of former ages, nothing remained to the Revolutionists but to direct their fury against Heaven itself. Pache, Hébert, and Chaumette, the leaders of the municipality, publicly expressed their determination "to dethrone the King of Heaven as well as the monarchs of the earth." To accomplish this design, they prevailed on Gobel, the apostate constitutional Bishop of Paris, to appear at the bar of the Convention, accompanied by some of the clergy of his diocese, and there abjure the Christian faith. That base prelate declared "that no other national religion was now required but that of liberty, equality, and morality."* Many of the constitutional bishops and clergy in the Convention joined in the proposition. The Convention received them with loud applause, and gave them the fraternal kiss. Crowds of drunken artisans and shameless prostitutes crowded to the bar, and trampled under their feet the sacred vases, consecrated for ages to the holiest purposes of religion. The sections of Paris shortly after followed the example of the constitutional clergy, and publicly abjured the Christian religion. The churches were stripped of all their ornaments; their plate and valuable contents were brought in heaps to the municipality and the Convention, from whence they were sent to the mint to be melted down. Trampling under foot the images of our Saviour and the Virgin, they elevated, amidst shouts of applause, the busts of Marat and Lepelletier, and danced round them, singing parodies on the Hallelujah, and dancing the Carmagnole. Momoro, the

* Gobel's abjuration of Christianity was in these terms:—"Aujourd'hui que la Révolution marche à grands pas vers une fin heureuse, puisqu'elle amène toutes les opinions à un seul centre politique; aujourd'hui qu'il ne doit plus y avoir d'autre culte public et national que celui de la liberté et de la sainte égalité, parceque le souverain le veut ainsi; conséquent à mes principes, je me soumetts à sa volonté, et je viens vous déclarer ici hautement que dès aujourd'hui je renonce à exercer mes fonctions de ministre du culte Catholique. Les citoyens mes vicaires ici présents se réunissent à moi: en conséquence nous remettons tous nos titres. Puisse cet exemple servir à consolider le règne de la liberté et de l'égalité. Vive la République!—GOBEL."

printer, an ardent member of the municipality, then said —“ Citizen representatives, you see before you your brothers, who desire to be regenerated, and to become men. You see the bishop of Paris, the grand vicars, and some of the priests, who, led by reason, come to lay aside the character which superstition had given them : that great example will be imitated by their colleagues. It is thus that the minions of despotism concur in its destruction ; it is thus that soon the French Republic will recognise no other worship but that of liberty, equality, and eternal truth, which, thanks to your immortal labours, will soon become universal.” During several weeks, daily abjurations by the constitutional clergy took place at the bar of the Convention. On the 10th November Sièyes appeared, and abjured, like the rest. “ I have lived,” said he, “ the victim of superstition. I will not be its slave. I know no other worship but that of liberty ; no other religion but the love of humanity and country.”¹

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Nov. 10.
¹ Hist. Parl.
xxx. 185,
186. Th.
v. 429, 430.
Deux Amis,
xii. 70, 71.
Lac. x. 300,
302. Toul.
iv. 124.

Shortly after, a still more indecent exhibition took place before the Convention. The celebrated prophecy of Father Beauregard was accomplished —“ Beauty without modesty was seen usurping the place of the Holy of Holies !” Hébert, Chaumette, and their associates, appeared at the bar, and declared that “ God did not exist, and that the worship of Reason was to be substituted in his stead.” Chaumette said : “ Legislative fanaticism has lost its hold ; it has given place to reason. Its dark eyes could not bear the light of reason. We have left its temples ; they are regenerated. To-day an immense multitude are assembled under its Gothic roofs, which, for the first time, will re-echo with the voice of truth. There the French will celebrate their true worship —that of liberty and reason. There we will form new vows for the prosperity of the armies of the Republic ; there we will abandon the worship of inanimate idols for that of *Reason*, this animated image, the *chef-d’œuvre* of

46.
The Goddess of Reason introduced into the Convention.
Nov. 9.

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creation." A veiled female, arrayed in blue drapery, was brought into the Convention; and Chaumette, taking her by the hand—"Mortals," said he, "cease to tremble before the powerless thunders of a God whom your fears have created. Henceforth acknowledge no divinity but Reason. I offer you its noblest and purest image; if you must have idols, sacrifice only to such as this."—Then, letting fall the veil, he exclaimed, "Fall before the august Senate of Freedom, Veil of Reason!" At the same time the goddess appeared, personified by a celebrated beauty, Madame Maillard of the opera, known in more than one character to most of the Convention. The goddess, after being embraced by the president, was mounted on a magnificent car, and conducted, amidst an immense crowd, to the cathedral of Notre-Dame, to take the place of the Deity. There she was elevated on the high altar, and received the adoration of all present; while a numerous band of elegant young women, all *figurantes* of the opera, her attendants, whose alluring looks already sufficiently indicated their profession, retired into the chapels round the choir, where every species of licentiousness and obscenity was indulged in without control, with hardly any veil from the public gaze. To such a length was this carried that Robespierre afterwards declared, that Chaumette deserved death for the abominations he had permitted on that occasion. Thenceforward that ancient edifice was called the *Temple of Reason*.^{1*} The same scene soon afterwards took place in the Church of St Sulpice, where the part of the Goddess of Reason was performed by Madame Momoro,

¹ Hist. de la
Conv. iii.
192-196.
Lac. x. 307,
308. Toul.
iv. 124. Th.
v. 431, 432.
Hist. Parl.
xxx. 197,
199. Jour-
nal de Paris,
No. 315.
Duval,
Souv. de la
Terreur, iv.
157, 159.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. vii.
310.

* It is a most curious circumstance that exactly the same thing had been done at Constantinople six hundred years before, by the French Crusaders, who stormed the Byzantine capital. "In the cathedral of St Sophia," says Gibbon, "the ample veil of the sanctuary was rent asunder, for the sake of the golden fringe; and the altar, a monument of art and riches, was broken in pieces, and shared among the captors. A prostitute was seated on the throne of the Patriarch, and that daughter of Belial, as she is styled, sang and danced in the church, to ridicule the hymns and processions of the Orientals. After stripping the gems and pearls, they converted the chalices into drinking-cups, and they

wife of the printer, and the intimate friend of Hébert. She appeared to the crowd of worshippers in the attire in which Venus displayed herself to Paris ; but to her credit it must be added, her shame was such that she fainted on the altar.

CHAP.
XIV.
1793.

The municipality, elated by the success of their efforts to overturn the Christian religion, and the countenance they had received in their designs from the National Convention, lost no time in adopting the most decisive measures for its entire extirpation. All the relics preserved in the churches of Paris were ordered to be deposited in the commune, and the loudest applause shook the hall when the section of Quinze-Vingts brought the shirt of St Louis, long the object of esteem, to be burned on the altar of Reason. On the 11th November the popular society of the Musée entered the hall of the municipality, exclaiming, “Vive la Raison !” and carrying on the top of a pole the half-burnt remains of several books, among others the breviaries and the *Old and New Testament*, “which have expiated in a great fire,” said their president, “all the fooleries which they have made the human race commit.” Taking advantage of the enthusiasm which this announcement excited, Hébert proposed and carried a resolution for the demolition of the whole of the steeples of Paris, on the ground that they were “repugnant to the principles of equality.” On the same day, a decree was passed for the destruction of all the sculpture on Notre-Dame, excepting that on the two lateral portals, which were to be saved, Chaumette said, “because Dupiers had there traced his planetary system.” Finally, on the 23d November, atheism in

47.
Atheistical
decrees of
the municipi-
pality of
Paris.

Nov. 11.

trampled under foot the most venerable objects of the Christian worship. *Nor were the repositories of the royal dead secure from violation.* In the Church of the Apostles, *the tombs of the Emperors were rifled* ; and it is said that, after six centuries, the corpse of Justinian was found without any signs of decay or putrefaction.”—GIBBON, xi. 237. Is this the history of 1201 or 1793—of the sack of Constantinople, or the orgies of the Revolution ? National character seems indelible by any length of time. “*Cælum, non animum, mutant, qui trans mare currunt.*”

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

Nov. 23.

Dec. 2.

¹ Journal
de Paris,
No. 318.
Moniteur.
Hist. Parl.
xxx. 200,
204.

France reached its extreme point, by a decree of the municipality ordering the immediate closing of all the churches, and placing the whole priests under surveillance. At the same period they gave decisive proof of the bloody use they were to make of their power, by ordering lists of all the persons who were suspected, and all who had at any time signed anti-revolutionary petitions, to be sent to the forty-eight sections of Paris, and in some sections they refused passports to them, when desirous of leaving the city.¹

48.
Universal
abandon-
ment of re-
ligion, and
closing of the
churches.

The services of religion were now universally abandoned. The pulpits were deserted throughout all the revolutionised districts; baptisms ceased; the burial service was no longer heard; the sick received no communion, the dying no consolation. A heavier anathema than that of papal power pressed upon the peopled realm of France—the anathema of Heaven, inflicted by the madness of her own inhabitants. The village bells were silent; Sunday was obliterated. Infancy entered the world without a blessing; age left it without a hope. In lieu of the services of the church, the licentious fêtes of the new system were performed by the most abandoned females; it appeared as if the Christian worship had been succeeded by the orgies of the Babylonian priests, or the grossness of the Hindoo theocracy. On every tenth day a revolutionary leader ascended the pulpit, and preached atheism to the bewildered audience; Marat was universally deified; and even the instrument of death was sanctified by the name of the “Holy Guillotine.” It might well be called so: how many martyrs did it bring to light! On all the public cemeteries the inscription was placed, “Death is an Eternal Sleep.” The comedian Monvel, in the church of St Roch, carried impiety to its utmost length. “God! if you exist,” said he, “avenge your injured name. *I bid you defiance.* You remain silent; you dare not launch your thunders; who, after this, will believe in your existence?”² It is

² Deux
Amis, xii.
67, 73, 74.
Lac. x. 308,
309, 331.
Toul. iv.
124. Mig.
ii. 299.
Souv. de
la Terreur,
iv. 149,
150.

by slower means, and the operation of unfailing laws, that the decrees of Providence are accomplished. A more convincing proof of divine government than the destruction of the blasphemer was about to be afforded; the annihilation of the guilty by their own hands, and as the consequence of the passions which they themselves had unchained. “Deus patiens,” says St Augustin, “quia æternus.” *

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

The most sacred relations of life were at the same period placed on a new footing, suited to the extravagant ideas of the times. Marriage was declared a civil contract, binding only during the pleasure of the contracting parties. Divorce immediately became general; the corruption of manners reached a pitch unknown during the worst days of the monarchy; the vices of the marquises and countesses of the time of Louis XV. descended to the shopkeepers and artisans of Paris. So indiscriminate did concubinage become, that, by a decree of the Convention, bastards were declared entitled to an equal share of the succession with legitimate children. Made-moiselle Arnould, a celebrated comedian, expressed the public feeling when she called “*Marriage the Sacrament of Adultery*.” The divorces in Paris, in the first three months of 1793, were 562, while the marriages were only 1785—a proportion probably unexampled among mankind. The consequences soon became apparent. Before the era of the Consulate, one-half of the whole births in Paris were illegitimate; and at this day, notwithstanding the apparent reformation of manners which has taken place since the Restoration, every third child to be seen in the streets of Paris is a bastard.¹

49.
General and
excessive
dissolute-
ness of man-
ners.1 Dupin, i.
79. Lac.
x. 332, 333.
Burke, viii.
176. Reg.
Peace.

A decree of the Convention soon after suppressed all the public schools and colleges, even those of medicine and surgery. Their whole revenues were confiscated. Even the academies which had become so celebrated in European history, by the illustrious men by whom they

50.
Confisca-
tion of the
property of
hospitals
and the
poor.
Sept. 7.

* “God is patient because eternal.”

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

had been graced, were involved in the general proscription. The exquisite tapestry of the Gobelins was publicly burned, because the mark of the crown and arms of France was on it. All the sculpture and statuary which could be found on tombs, in churches, palaces, or chateaus, was destroyed, because it savoured of royalty and aristocracy. New schools, on a plan originally traced out by Condorcet, were directed to be formed, but no efficient steps were taken to insure their establishment; and education, for a number of years, almost entirely ceased through all France.* One establishment only, the Polytechnic School, dates from this melancholy epoch. During this fearful night, the whole force of the human mind was bent upon the mathematical sciences, which flourished from the concentration of its powers, and were soon illuminated by the most splendid light. In the general havoc, even the establishments of charity were not spared. The revenues of the hospitals and humane institutions throughout the country were confiscated by the despots whom the people had seated on the throne; their domains sold as part of the national property. Soon the terrible effects of the suppression of all permanent sources of relief to the destitute became apparent. Mendicity advanced with frightful steps; and soon the condition of the poor throughout France became such, as to call forth the loudest lamentations from the few enlightened philanthropists who still followed the car of the Revolution.¹

¹ Rapport sur la Mendicité, par Liancourt, ii. 20. Lac. x. 322, 323. Deux Amis, xiii. 24.

51.
Noble firmness of the Bishop of Blois.
Nov. 7.

In the midst of the general desertion of the Christian faith by the constitutional clergy, it is consolatory to have, for the honour of human nature, one instance of an opposite character to recount. Gregory, Bishop of Blois, arrived in the Convention: he was pressed to imitate the example of Gobel. He ascended the tribune; and, while the Assembly expected to hear him abjure like the rest,

* "Sous le Règne de la Terreur, les collèges et les écoles étaient absolument abandonnés: les pères et les mères ne songeant qu'à mettre leurs jours en sûreté, étaient occupés seulement de leur propre conservation."—*Deux Amis*, xii. 2.

he said—"My attachment to the cause of liberty is well known; I have given multiplied proofs of it. If the present question relates to the revenues of my bishopric, I resign them without regret. If it is a question of religion, that is a matter beyond your jurisdiction, and you have no right to enter upon it. I hear much of fanaticism and superstition. Reflect on what the words mean, and you will see that it is something diametrically opposite to religion. As for myself, Catholic by conviction and sentiment, priest by choice, I have been named by the people to be a bishop; but it is neither from them nor you that I hold my mission. I consented to bear the mitre at a time when it was a crown of thorns: they tormented me to accept it; they torment me now to extort an abdication, which they shall not tear from me. Acting on sacred principles which are dear to me, and which I defy you to ravish from me, I have endeavoured to do good in my diocese: I will remain a bishop to do so, and I invoke for my shield the liberty of worship." This courageous speech produced great astonishment in the Convention, and he was denounced at the Jacobins for having wished to "christianise" the Revolution; but Robespierre, who was in secret averse to these scandalous scenes as likely to discredit it, did not support the clamour, and he escaped being sent to the guillotine.¹

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

Nov. 13.
¹ Hist. Parl.
 xxx. 193,
 194. Journal des
 Jacobins,
 Nov. 13,
 1793.

Meanwhile the Jacobins were bestowing every imaginable honour on the memory of Marat, who, beyond either Voltaire or Rousseau, became the object of general adoration. Then was seen how much the generous but mistaken devotion of Charlotte Corday had in reality strengthened the power of the tyrants. The fruit of crime is never salutary; for it shocks the feelings, on which alone real amendment can be founded. Marat's bust was placed in the Convention, and on an altar in the Louvre, with the inscription—"Unable to corrupt, they have assassinated him." He became, literally speaking, an object of worship; great numbers of victims were sacrificed to his

52.
 Apotheosis
 of Marat.
 Nov. 14.

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

Nov. 14.

¹Biog. Univ.
xxvi. 564,
565.

53.
Vast public
measures of
the Conven-
tion.

memory ; and the monster who had incessantly urged the cutting off of two hundred and eighty thousand heads was assimilated to the Saviour of the world. A couplet was composed by a member of the Revolutionary Committee of the section Marat, the burden of which was—"O sacred heart of Jesus ! O sacred heart of Marat !" On the 21st September his apotheosis took place with great pomp. His bust was soon to be seen in every village of France ; and on the 14th November a decree of the Convention, proceeding on a report of the younger Chénier, was passed, directing his ashes to be transferred to the Pantheon, where they were accordingly deposited with great pomp not long afterwards, in the room of the remains of Mirabeau, which were thrown out. Many months had not elapsed before Chénier's brother, the celebrated poet, became the victim of Marat's principles.¹

But amidst this extraordinary mixture of republican transports and individual baseness, the great measures of the Revolution were steadily advancing, and producing effects of incalculable moment and lasting effect on the fortunes of France. Three of paramount importance took place during the course of the year 1793, and produced consequences which will be felt by the latest generation in that country. These were the immense levies, first of three hundred thousand, then of twelve hundred thousand men, which took place in the course of that year ; the confiscation of two-thirds of the landed property in the kingdom, which arose from the decrees of the Convention against the emigrants, clergy, and persons convicted at the Revolutionary Tribunals ; and the unbounded issue of assignats on the security of the national domains. These great measures, which no government could have attempted except during the fervour of a revolution, mutually, though for a brief period, upheld each other, and perpetuated the revolutionary system by the important interests which were made to depend on its continuance. The immense levy of soldiers drew off almost all

the ardent and energetic spirits, and not only furnished bread to the multitudes whom the closing of all pacific employments had deprived of subsistence, but let off in immense channels the inflamed and diseased blood of the nation ; the confiscation of the land placed funds worth above £700,000,000 sterling at the disposal of the government, which they were enabled to squander with boundless profusion in the maintenance of the revolutionary regime at home, and the contest with its enemies abroad ; the extraordinary issue of paper, to the amount ultimately of £350,000,000, always enabled the treasury to liquidate the demands upon it, and interested every holder of property in the kingdom in the support of the national domains, the only security on which it rested. During the unparalleled and almost demoniac energy produced by the sudden operation of these powerful causes, France was unconquerable ; and it was their combined operation which brought it triumphant through that violent and unprecedented crisis.¹

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

¹ Rapport de Cambon, May 16. *Moniteur*, May 18, p. 973. *Toul.* v. 194. *Th.* vii, 239.

Europe has had too much reason to become acquainted with the military power developed by France during this eventful period ; but the civil force, exerted by the dictators within their own dominions, though less generally known, was perhaps still more remarkable. Forty-eight thousand revolutionary committees were soon established in the Republic, being one in each commune, and embracing above 500,000 members, all the most resolute and determined of the Jacobin party. Between the military defenders and the civil servants of the government, almost all the active and resolute men in France, and the whole of the depraved and abandoned ones, were in the pay of the dictators, and the whole starving energy of the country fed on the spoils of its defenceless opulence :—a terrible system, drawing after it the total dissolution of society ; capable of being executed only by the most audacious wickedness, but never likely, when it is attempted, of failing, for a time at least, of success.

54.
Its enormous expenditure.

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

¹ Châteaub.
Etud. Hist.
i. Pref. 97,
98. Hist.
Parl. xxix.
45, 46.

This system produced astonishing effects for a limited period, just as an individual who, in a few years, squanders a great fortune, outshines all those who live wholly on the fruits of their industry. But the inevitable period of weakness soon arrives; the maniac who exerts his demoniac strength cannot in the end withstand the steady efforts of intelligence. The career of extravagance is in general short; bankruptcy arrests alike the waste of improvidence and the fleeting splendour which attends it.¹

55.
Prodigious
issue of as-
signats. Its
effects.

Cambon, the minister of finance, in August 1793 made an important and astonishing revelation of the length to which the issue of assignats had been carried under the Reign of Terror. The national expenses had exceeded 300,000,000 of francs, or above £12,000,000, a-month; the receipts of the treasury, during the disorder which prevailed, never reached a fourth part of that sum; and there was no mode of supplying the deficiency but by an incessant issue of paper money. The quantity in circulation on the 15th August 1793 amounted to 3,775,846,033 livres, or £151,000,000; the quantity issued since the commencement of the Revolution had been no less than 5,100,000,000 francs, or £204,000,000 sterling. This system continued during the whole Reign of Terror, and produced a total confusion of property of every sort. All the persons employed by government, both in the civil and military departments, were paid in the paper currency at par; but as it rapidly fell, from the enormous quantity in circulation, to a tenth part, and soon a twentieth of its value, the pay received was merely nominal, and those in the receipt of the largest apparent incomes were in want of the common necessities of life. Pichegru, at the head of the army of the north, with a nominal pay of four thousand francs a-month, was in the actual receipt, on the Rhine, in 1795, of only two hundred francs, or £8 sterling in gold or silver—a smaller sum than the pay of an English lieutenant; and Hoche, the

commander of a hundred thousand men, the army of La Vendée, besought the government to send him a horse, as he was unable to purchase one, and the military requisitions had exhausted all those in the country where he commanded. If such was the condition of the superior, it may be imagined what was the situation of the inferior officers and private soldiers. While in their own country, and deprived of the resource of foreign plunder, they were literally starving; and the necessity of conquest was felt as strongly, to enable them to live on the spoils of their enemies, as to avert the sword of desolation from the frontiers of France.¹

CHAP.

XIV.

1793.

¹ Rapport
par Cambon,
Aug. 15.
Th. viii. 103,
115, 446.
Hist. Parl.
xxx. 445.

This constant and increasing depreciation of the assignats produced its natural and unavoidable effect in an unprecedented enhancement of the price of provisions and all the articles of human consumption. The assignats were not absorbed in the purchase of the national domains, because the holders were distrustful of the security of the revolutionary title, which they could alone receive; and as their issue continued at the rate of £10,000,000 sterling a-month, of course the market became gorged, and the value of these securities rapidly declined. Though this depreciation was unavoidable, the Convention endeavoured to arrest it, and enacted the punishment of six years in irons against any who should exchange any quantity of silver or gold for a greater nominal value of assignats; or should ask a larger price for any articles of merchandise, if the price was paid in paper, than if paid in the precious metals. It is needless to say, that this forced attempt to sustain the value of the assignats proved totally nugatory; and the consequences soon became fatal to many classes of persons. Debtors of every description hastened to discharge their obligations; and the creditors, compelled to accept paper at par, which was not worth a fifth or tenth, at last not a hundredth, of its nominal value, were defrauded of nearly the whole of their property. But their outcries were speedily drowned in the shout of the

56.
Their rapid
depreciation.

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

far more numerous body of debtors liberated from their demands. These transports, however, were of short duration, and the labouring classes from the very first were ruined beyond redemption. Their wages, in consequence of the total destruction of credit, general decline of consumption, and universal stagnation of industry, had by no means risen in proportion to this fall in the value of the assignats, and they found themselves miserably off for the necessaries of life ; while the farmers, raising the price of their provisions in proportion to the fall in the value of paper, soon elevated them beyond the reach of the labouring poor. This state of things, so opposite to what they had been led to expect as the result of a revolution, excited the most vehement discontent among the working classes ; they ascribed it all, as is always the case in similar circumstances, to the efforts of aristocrats and forestallers, and demanded with loud cries that they should be led out to the guillotine.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, x.
282, 284.
Th. v. 147,
149.

57.

Origin of the
law of the
maximum
on prices.

May 4.

It became then absolutely necessary to have recourse to a *maximum*: powerful as the Committee of Public Salvation was, a longer continuance of the public discontents would have endangered its existence. Corn, indeed, was not wanting ; but the farmers, dreading the tumult and violence of the markets, and unwilling to part with their produce at the nominal value of the assignats, refused to bring it to the towns. To such a pitch did this evil arise in the beginning of May 1793, that the Convention was forced to issue a decree, compelling the farmers and grain-merchants to declare what stock they had in their possession, and to bring it to the public markets at a price fixed by each commune. Domiciliary visits were authorised, to inspect the stock of each holder of corn, and false returns were punished by a forfeiture of the whole. In addition to this, the distribution of bread by the bakers was provided for in the most minute manner. No one could obtain it without producing a *carte de sûreté*, issued by the revolutionary committees ; and

on that *carte* was inscribed the number of his family, and the quantity to be delivered to each member. Finally, to put an end to the scandalous scenes which generally took place at the bakers' doors, it was enacted that every bread-shop should have *a rope attached to it*; each person, as he arrived, was obliged to take it in his hand, and remain quietly there till all before him were served. But in the struggles of discontent and famine, the cord was frequently broken, fierce conflicts ensued, and nothing but a prompt interposition of military force was able to restore tranquillity. To such minute and vexatious regulations are governments reduced when they once violate the freedom of human action; and to such a load of fetters do the people in the end subject themselves, when they give way to the insane passion for democratic power.¹

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

¹ Th. v. 151.
Decree, May
4. Moni-
teur, 5 Mai,
p. 551.

All the other articles of subsistence as well as corn speedily rose with the increased issue of the assignats, and the people persisted in ascribing to forestallers the natural consequences of a depreciated circulation. Frightful tumults in consequence arose; the boats which descended the Seine with groceries, fruits, and wood, were seized and plundered. Terrified at the continual recurrence of these disorders, the capitalists declined investing their money in purchases of any sort; and the shares in foreign mercantile companies rose rapidly from the increased demand for them, as the only investment affording a tolerable degree of security: another striking proof of the disastrous influence of the disorders consequent on popular ambition, and their tendency to turn from the people the reservoirs by which their industry is maintained. During the perils and chances of the revolution, the tendency to gambling of every sort prodigiously increased. Men who had the sword of Damocles continually suspended over their heads, sought to make the most of the numerous chances of making money which the rapid issue and fall of the assignats, and the boundless profusion of articles of luxury, brought into the market by the ruin of their

58.
Great in-
crease of
disorders
and gam-
bling from
the rapid
change of
prices.

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

¹ Decree,
July 26.
Moniteur,
27 Juillet.
Th. v. 152.

owners, naturally occasioned. So enormous did these evils become that, on 26th July 1793, the forestalling of provisions was declared a capital crime; and the penalty of death was in like manner extended to all those who retained articles of subsistence without bringing them to daily sale, or who did not, within eight days from the publication of the decree, make a declaration to the municipal officers of their district, of the amount of provisions, including wine and oil, they had on hand, with a specification of the proportions in which they were going to bring them to market.¹

59.
Profligacy
which every
where pre-
vailed.

The bourse of Paris was crowded with bankers, revolutionists, ci-devant priests, ruined nobles, and adventurers of every description, who sometimes made enormous gains, and passed a life of debauchery with actresses, opera-dancers, and abandoned women of every description, whom the dissolution of society had brought in contact with those who had risen for the moment on the wheels of fortune. Such was the universal profligacy of manners, arising from the dread of popular jealousy, that almost all the members of the Convention lived publicly with mistresses, who became possessed of much of their influence in the state. To have done otherwise would have exposed them to the blasting suspicion of being Christians and Royalists. This prevailing profligacy appeared in the most striking manner, in the great number of divorces which took place during this calamitous period of French history. They were owing, partly to marriage being now declared a civil contract, which might be dissolved at any time at the pleasure of the contracting parties; partly to the irreligion and lax morality of the age; and partly to the dreadful uncertainty of life, and the thirst for immediate enjoyment, which had seized all classes from that uncertainty. From these combined causes, the morality of the age, as measured by the relations of the sexes, sank lower in revolutionary France than it had ever done in modern

Europe; and the number of divorces,* in the first burst of social regeneration, exceeded what had been known in Rome under the despotism of the Cæsars. So far did the universal fervour and the license of passion proceed, that it led to the institution of clubs for women, where political subjects of all sorts were discussed with all the vehemence and impassioned feeling which characterise the softer sex. One of these female clubs was held in a hall adjoining that of the Jacobins, and speedily became the favourite resort of the most noted actresses and courtesans in Paris. One of the former, named Rose Lacombe, acquired great celebrity by her fearless demeanour, her beauty, and ardent declamations in favour of republican principles. The disorders consequent on these female assemblies, which had six thousand members, at length became so flagrant that they attracted the notice of the Convention and municipality. Chaumette had the address to persuade the female patriots, who had forced their way into the hall of the municipality, that they had mistaken the real theatre of their power, and that, instead of aiming at dividing the government of the state with men, they would do better to acquire an undivided dominion by ruling the men.† The female clubs were soon after closed by order of the Convention.¹

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

¹ Lam. Hist.
des Gir. vii.
349, 353.
Th. v. 152,
161. Hist.
de la Conv.
iv. 81, 82.

* The following Table—one of the most curious records of the Revolution—compiled from the *Moniteur* of the dates under-mentioned, shows the marriages and divorces in Paris during part of the Reign of Terror:—

1793.	Marriages.	Divorces.	Births.	Deaths.	Moniteur.
May.	658	211	1724	2039	11th June.
June.	580	183	1635	1667	4th Aug.
July.	639	218	1767	1512	Do.
Sept. 14.	24	9	42	64	Sept. 15.
Oct. 16.	8	6	46	66	Oct. 18.
1794.					
Feb.	890	190	1754	2174	March 26.

The marriages and divorces—or “état civil,” as it is called—are published very irregularly in the *Moniteur*.

† “‘La Nature,’” said Chaumette, “‘a dit à l’homme sois homme, et à la femme sois femme, et tu seras la divinité du sanctuaire intérieur. Femmes imprudentes, qui voulez devenir hommes! n’êtes-vous pas assez bien partagées? Vous dominez sur tous nos sens. Votre despotisme est celui de l’amour, et par conséquent celui de la nature.’ A ces mots les femmes enlèvent de leurs fronts le bonnet rouge.”—LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, vii. 355.

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.
60.
Official ac-
count of the
number of
prisoners in
Paris during
the Reign of
Terror.

Nor was the state of the prisons in Paris and over France a less extraordinary and memorable monument of the Reign of Terror. When the Girondists were overthrown on the 31st May 1793, the number of prisoners in the different jails of Paris was about 1150; but before three months of the Reign of Terror had elapsed, their number was doubled, and it gradually rose to an average of *six, seven, and at last eight thousand, constantly in captivity in the metropolis alone.* The whole prisons in the capital being filled by this prodigious crowd, the castle of Vincennes was surveyed with a view to additional accommodation, and the Jacobins boasted it could contain six or seven thousand more.* The official bulletins,†

* "*Courez à Vincennes. On pourrait y loger six à sept mille détenus.*"—*Note de PAYAN; Papiers trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 403.

† Note :—

Date.	Number of Prisoners in Paris.	AUTHORITIES.	Vol.	No.	Page.
June 1, 1793	1182	JOURNAL de la MONTAGNE,	II.	—	—
August 27, ...	1601	... ..	...	88	610
Septem. 8, ...	1794	... ..	...	100	695
... 16, ...	2041	... ..	III.	108	760
October 5, ...	2378	... ..	...	125	896
... 23, ...	2894	... ..	...	136	984
Novem. 17, ...	3235	... ..	...	158	1072
Decem. 14, ...	3499	... ..	...	21	161
... 21, ...	4161	... ..	...	28	219
... 24, ...	4325	... ..	...	31	245
January 4, 1794	4595	... ..	...	42	339
... 10, ...	4605	... ..	...	47	371
... 23, ...	5031	... ..	...	65	517
Febru. 10, ...	5228	... ..	...	77	612
... 21, ...	5569	... ..	...	98	779
March 1, ...	5821	... ..	...	103	821
... 10, ...	5991	... ..	...	116	897
... 23, ...	6104	... ..	...	120	952
April 1, ...	7460	... ..	...	158	1272
... 15, ...	7241	... ..	IV.	8	61
... 18, ...	7541	... ..	...	18	141
... 24, ...	7674	MONITEUR, April 27,	...	26	203
May 24, ...	8241†	JOURNAL de la MONTAGNE,	...	34	585
June 1, ...	7084	... ..	...	—	—
July 8, ...	7502	... ..	...	—	—
... 27, ...	7913	MONITEUR, Aug. 20.	...	—	—

Immense as these numbers are, we have the authority of an unexceptionable witness for the fact, that, during the last five months of the period, they were

‡ Including those in the Conciergerie.

published weekly, of the number of prisoners in the jails of Paris, is one of the most interesting monuments of the Revolution, and Leveau's *Journal de la Montagne*, the Jacobin organ of Paris, set up on the 2d June 1793, has at least done one service to humanity by having preserved the dismal record. It is equalled only by the catalogue of the executions, which, long averaging from seven to ten, at length rose to forty and fifty, and, on the fall of Robespierre, had at times reached *eighty* a-day. Apply these numbers to the remainder of France,—which, considering the enormous accumulation of prisoners at Lyons, Toulon, and La Vendée, and the revolutionary tribunals at work in almost every considerable town, especially Nantes, Toulon, Bordeaux, Lyons, Strassburg, and Arras, seems not beyond the bounds of probability, and call the population of Paris 650,000, or about a fortieth part of the whole population of France, which at that period contained about 26,000,000 souls,—and we shall arrive at the result, that at the commencement of the Reign of Terror the number of persons in jail, almost all for political offences, was over all France forty-five thousand, and in its latter stages had risen to *three hundred thousand*, of whom, for a month before the fall of Robespierre, from *two to three thousand were daily put to death by the guillotine* ;—at least a hundred times the number of prisoners, and a thousand times the number of executions, that, since the

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1793.

in reality at least 1000 greater every week than these returns exhibit.—*Déposition de LECOINTRE* ; *Procès de FOUQUIER-TINVILLE*, No. XV.—One reason of this was, that from the date of the decree in June 1794, directing state prisoners from the departments in many cases to be forwarded to Paris, the prisoners in the Conciergerie, one of the largest jails in that city, to which these foreign detachments were sent, were not included in the returns, and so several of them are imperfect.

How applicable to Paris at this period are the lines of Corneille :—

“ Le séjour de votre potentat,

Qui n'a que ses fureurs pour maximes d'état,
Je n'appelle plus Rome—un enclos de murailles
Que ces proscriptions comblent de funérailles ;
Ces murs dont le destin fut autrefois si beau
N'en sont que la prison, ou plutôt le tombeau.”

Sertorius, Act iii. scene 2.

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XIV.

1793.

61.
Forced re-
quisitions
of grain,
horses, and
carriages.
August 16
and 17.

atrocious era of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, had disgraced the worst period of the monarchy.

The forced requisitions of horses, ammunition, provisions, and stores of every sort, from the people, soon proved the source of infinite and most vexatious burdens. In August 1793, eighteen commissioners were nominated by the Convention, with powers to require from the primary assemblies, in every part of France, unlimited supplies of men, horses, provisions, and ammunition. The principle founded on was, that the men and animals indispensable for the purposes of agriculture should alone be preserved, and that all the remainder might be seized for the purposes of the Republic. All the horses of draught and burden, not absolutely required by the cultivators or manufacturers, were seized for the state ; all the arms of every description appropriated by the government commissioners ; the great hotels of the emigrants confiscated to the use of the state, and converted into vast workshops for the manufacture of arms, clothing, or equipment for the armies, or magazines for the storing of subsistence for the use of the people. The principal manufactory of arms was established at Paris, and the whole workmen in iron and jewellery were pressed into its service. It soon became capable of sending forth a thousand muskets a-day. To such a length did the dictators carry their principle of managing everything of their own authority, that they compelled a return of the whole subsistence in every part of the country, and endeavoured to purchase it all, and distribute it either to the armies, or at a low price to the imperious citizens of the towns. This system of forced requisitions gave the government the command of a large proportion of the agricultural produce of the kingdom, and it was enforced with merciless severity. Not only grain, but horses, carriages, and conveyances of every sort, were forcibly taken from the cultivators ; and as the payment they received was wholly in assignats, it in truth amounted to nothing. These exactions excited

the most violent discontent, but no one ventured to give it vent : to have expressed dissatisfaction would immediately have led to denunciation at the nearest revolutionary committee, and put the complainer in imminent hazard of his life. To complete the burden, the democratic power, incessant clamour, and destitute situation of the people in the great towns, rendered it indispensable to adopt some general measures for their relief ; and the only method which was found effectual was to put them on the same footing with the armies, and give the agents of government the right of making forced requisitions for their support.¹

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1793.

¹ Decree, Aug. 16 and 17. Moniteur, Aug. 18. Hist. Parl. xxi. 463, 464. Th. v. 141, 188. Hist. de la Conv. iii. 237, 245.

The maintenance of such immense bodies of men as the idle revolutionists in the great cities composed, ere long came to be of itself equal to the whole administration of an ordinary government. A board was appointed of five directors, who soon had ten thousand persons in daily pay, incessantly occupied in enforcing these requisitions for their support. This corps of commissaries for Paris was of itself an army. No less than 636,000 persons daily received rations at the public offices, the entire amount being eighteen hundred and ninety-seven sacks of meal ; and the attention of government was incessantly directed towards keeping the citizens in good-humour by regularity in the distribution. The losses sustained by the agriculturists in providing for this daily consumption were enormous ; the cost of producing their grain had augmented tenfold from the depreciation of paper, and yet they were only paid the former price by the requisitionists. The farmers were obliged to pay ten francs a-day to their labourers, instead of one franc, as in 1790, and everything else in the same proportion ; yet they were compelled to part with their grain at the price fixed by the maximum, which was calculated on the scale of prices before the Revolution, to the imperious and needy multitudes in the towns. In other words, nine-tenths of the subsistence daily consumed in Paris was extorted *without payment* from the

62.

Public robbery for the support of the populace of the cities.

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

¹ *Moniteur*,

Oct. 14,

1793. Th.

vii. 233, 237.

*Hist. de la**Conv.* iii.

180, 240.

cultivators in the country, and the cries of the sufferers were stifled by the prospect of the guillotine—a striking instance of the grinding oppression exercised even over their own class by the sovereign people, when they once obtain the ascendancy, and the state of subjection to which, in the progress of revolutions, the inhabitants of the country invariably fall to the citizens of towns.¹

63.
The immense burden it entailed on the state, and forced loans from the opulent classes,

The necessity of feeding the multitude entailed other expenses of a more serious kind on the Convention, and occasioned a large part of their never-ending financial embarrassments. Government bought grain from foreigners for twenty-one francs the quintal, and retailed it to the populace for fourteen; the cessation of agricultural labour in a great part of the country rendered it indispensable to carry on this ruinous commerce to a great extent, and the losses thence accruing to the state were stated by Cambon as enormous. The expense of feeding the inhabitants of Paris soon nearly equalled that of the maintenance of the fourteen armies. The Convention introduced the ruinous system of distributing every day, to every citizen of the capital, as the only means of keeping them quiet, a pound of bread, at the price of three sous in assignats—a burden which, from the fall in the value of paper, soon became almost as great as that of supporting them altogether. As provisions, in consequence of these prodigious efforts made in favour of the metropolis, were far cheaper there than in the surrounding districts, smuggling from the one to the other went on to a vast extent, and continual complaints were made of the great fortunes which the rich were making by exporting quantities of bread out of the metropolis. At the commencement of the Reign of Terror, the government adopted the plan of a forced loan from the opulent classes. This tax was imposed on an ascending scale, increasing according to the fortunes of the individuals; and out of an income of 50,000 francs, or £2000 a-year, they took, in 1792, 36,000

francs, or £1440. This immense burden was calculated as likely to produce at once a milliard of francs, or £40,000,000 sterling; and, as a security for this advance, the persons taxed received assignats, or were inscribed as public creditors on the *grand livre* of the French funds—a security, in either case, depending entirely on the success of the Revolution, and which proved in the end almost elusory.¹

The public creditors of every description continued to be paid in assignats at par, notwithstanding their having fallen to a tenth of their nominal value; in other words, they received only a tenth part of what was really due to them. To perpetuate still further the dependence of the moneyed classes on the fortunes of the Revolution, the plan was projected by Cambon, and adopted by the Convention, of compelling all holders of stock to surrender to government their titles to it, and, in lieu of every other written right, they were merely inscribed on the *grand livre* of the French debt; and an extract of that inscription constituted thereafter the sole title of the proprietor. Most severe laws were enacted to compel the surrender of the older titles to the stock, which were immediately burned, and if a year elapsed without this being done, the capital was forfeited. All the capital sums owing by the state were converted into perpetual annuities, at the rate of five per cent; so that a stock of 1000 francs was inscribed on the book for a perpetual annuity of fifty francs, and government was for ever relieved of the burden of discharging the principal sums. “In this manner,” said Cambon, “the debt contracted by despotism becomes undistinguishable from that contracted since the Revolution; and I defy despotic power, should it ever revive, to distinguish its ancient creditors from those of the new régime. As soon as this operation is completed, you will see the capitalist who now desires the restoration of a King, because he has a king for a debtor, and who fears that he will lose his fortune if he is not re-esta-

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxviii. 451,
452. Hist.
de la Conv.
iii. 250, 300.
Th. vii. 137,
203. Lac.
xi. 142.

64.

Confusion of
the old and
Revolution-
ary debt.

Aug. 15.

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

¹ Cambon,
Rapport sur
le Grand
Livres, Aug.
15. Hist.
Parl. xxxi.
446, 459.
Th. v. 147,
191, 193.
Hist de la
Conv. iii.
290, 319.

blished, desire equally vehemently the preservation of the Republic, when his private interests are irrecoverably wound up in its preservation." The whole creditors, both royal and republican, were paid only in assignats, which progressively fell to a fifth, a tenth, a hundredth, and at last, in 1797, to a two hundred and fiftieth part of their nominal value; so that in the space of a few years the payment was entirely elusory, and a national bankruptcy had in fact existed many years before it was formally declared by the Directory.¹

65.
Continued
fall of the
assignats.
Severe laws
against fore-
stallers and
all public
companies.
Sept. 5.

All the measures of government, however, how vigorous and despotic soever, proved inadequate to sustain the falling value of the assignats, or keep down the money price of provisions, or articles of daily consumption, which necessarily rose with such prodigious additions to the circulating medium. To effect the object, they had recourse to new and still more oppressive regulations. To destroy the competition of rival companies, which prevented the direction of capital towards the purchase of the national domains, they abolished, by decree, all life-insurance societies, and all companies of every description of which the shares were transferable from hand to hand; they declared traitors to their country all those who placed their funds in any investments in countries with which the Republic was at war; and condemned to twenty years in irons every person convicted of refusing to receive payment of any debt in assignats, or being concerned in any transaction in which they were received at less than their nominal value. Any person found guilty of buying or selling assignats was to be punished with death, by a decree of 5th September. They ordered that the bells of the churches should everywhere be melted down into sou-pieces, to answer the immediate wants of the peasantry; and passed a second decree, which ranked forestalling with capital crimes. By this last law, it was declared that every one was to be considered as a forestaller, who withdrew from circulation merchandise of

Sept. 5.

Sept. 20.

primary necessity, without immediately exposing it to public sale. The articles which had been previously declared to be of primary necessity were, bread, wine, butcher-meat, grain, oats, vegetables, fruits, coal, wood, butter, cheese, linen, cotton stuffs, and dress of every description, except silks. For all these articles a tariff of prices was fixed, far below what they could be purchased for or produced by the retail dealers, manufacturers, or farmers. To carry into execution this iniquitous decree, the most inquisitorial powers were conferred on the commissaries named by the commune. Every merchant was obliged, at their summons, to give a statement of the goods contained in his warehouses; these declarations were liable to be checked at any hour by domiciliary visits; and any fraud or concealment was declared punishable with death. Commissioners appointed by the communes were authorised to fix the price at which all these articles were to be sold; and if the necessary cost of the manufacture was such as to render the price beyond the reach of the people, they were still to be exposed to sale, at such a reduced price as might bring them within their means,—an atrocious edict, pressing with unparalleled severity upon the industrious classes, merely to gratify the needy and clamorous multitude in towns, on whom the government depended, and which, if it had subsisted long in force, would have destroyed all the industry of France, and handed over the people to the unmitigated horrors of actual famine.¹

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

¹ Decree,
Sept. 29.
Hist. Parl.
xxix. 12, 15,
42. Th. v.
204, 207.

These extravagant measures had not been many months in operation, before they produced the most disastrous effects. A great proportion of the shops in Paris and all the principal towns were shut; business of every sort was at a stand; the laws of the maximum, and against forestallers, had spread terror and distrust as much among the middle classes, who had commenced the Revolution, as the guillotine had among the nobles and priests, who had been its earliest victims. The retail

66.
Direful
effects of
these laws.

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

dealers, who had purchased the articles in which they dealt from wholesale merchants before the law of the maximum, at a price higher than that allowed by the new tariff, were compelled, by the terror of death, to sell at a loss to themselves, and saw their fortunes gradually melting away in their daily transactions. Even those who had laid in their stock after the imposition of the maximum were in no better situation, for that regulation had only fixed their price when retailed to the public; but as it had not fixed the price at which the previous manufacture was to be accomplished, nor the needful expense of transport and storing it in their warehouses effected, and as their operations were necessarily paid in proportion to the depreciated value of the currency, the subsequent sale at the prices fixed by the maximum entailed ruinous losses on the tradesmen. The consequence was, that the greater part of the shops were everywhere closed, and those who continued to do business did so only by fraud; the worst articles alone were exposed to public sale at the legal price, and the best reserved for those who were willing in secret to pay their real value. A sepulchral silence reigned in the once gay and joyous capital. In many streets hardly a shop was open; not a light was to be seen in the windows at night; and the doors were all barricaded, to give the inhabitants the means of escape by the back windows, if the commissaries of the Convention came to their abodes.^{1*}

¹ Deux
Amis, xii.
146, 147.
Th. v. 399,
400.

67.
Excessive
violence of
the people
from the rise
of prices.

The people, who perceived these frauds, and witnessed the closing of so great a number of shops, were transported with fury, and besieged the Convention with the most violent petitions, insisting that the dealers should be compelled to reopen their shops, and continue to sell as usual, in spite of any loss they might sustain. They

* “Au lieu de ce tumulte, de cette vie animée, de cet éclat imposant, qui autrefois distinguait Paris, un silence sépulchral règne dans tous les quartiers; toutes les boutiques sont déjà fermées, chacun s’empresse de se barricader chez soi; et l’on dirait que le crêpe de la mort est étendu sur tout ce qui respire.”—*Voyage de 48 heures à Paris dans le mois de Septembre 1793*; given in *Deux Amis*, xii. 146, 147.

denounced the butchers, who were accused of selling unwholesome meat ; the bakers, who furnished coarse bread for the poor, and fine for the rich ; the wine-merchants, who diluted their liquors by the most noxious drugs ; the salt-merchants, the grocers, the confectioners, who conspired together to adulterate the articles in which they dealt, in a thousand different ways. Chaumette, the procureur-general, supported their demands in a violent speech. “ We sympathise,” said he, “ with the evils of the people, because we are the people ourselves ; the whole council is composed of Sans-culottes ; it is the sovereign multitude. We care not though our heads fall, provided posterity will deign to collect our skulls. It is not the Gospel which I invoke—it is Plato. He that strikes with the sword should be struck with the sword ; he that strikes with poison should be struck with poison ; he that famishes the people should die of famine. If subsistence and articles of merchandise are wanting, from whom shall the people seize them ? From the Convention ? No. From the constituted authorities ? No. They will take them from the shopkeepers and merchants. It is arms, and not gold, which are wanted to set in motion our manufactories ; the world must know that the giant people can crush all its mercantile speculations. Rousseau has said, *When the people have nothing else to eat, they will eat the rich.*”¹

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

Sept. 4
and 10.

¹ Parl. xxix.
26, 32. Th.
v. 403.
Hist. de la
Conv. iii.
409, 437.

Intimidated by such formidable petitioners, the Convention and the municipality adopted still more rigorous measures. Hitherto they had only fixed the price of articles of necessity in a manufactured state, now they resolved to fix the price of the raw material ; and the idea was even entertained of seizing the material and the workmen alike for the service of the state, and converting all France into one vast manufactory in the employment of government. The communes declared that every merchant who had been engaged in business for above a year, who either abandoned or diminished it, should be

68.
Renewed
measures of
severity by
the municip-
ality and
the Conven-
tion.

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

Sept. 5.

sent to prison as a suspected person ; the prices which the merchant could exact from the retailer, and the retailer from the customer, were minutely fixed ; the revolutionary committees were alone permitted to issue tickets, authorising purchases of any sort ; only one species of bread, of coarse quality, was allowed to be baked ; and to prevent the scandalous scenes which daily occurred at the bakers' shops, where a number of the poor passed a part of the night with the cord in their hands, it was enacted that the distribution should commence with the last arrived,—a regulation which only changed the direction of the tumult.* These regulations were speedily adopted from the municipality of Paris over all France. Soon after, the Convention adopted the still more hazardous step of fixing the prime cost of all articles of rude produce. The price was fixed on the basis of the prices of 1790, augmented by certain fixed rates for the profit of the different hands through which they passed, before reaching the consumer. To carry into execution the numerous regulations on this subject, a commission of subsistence and provisioning was appointed, with absolute powers, extending over all France : it was charged with the execution of the tariffs, with the superintendence of the conduct of the municipalities in that particular ; with continually receiving statements of the quantity of subsistence in the country, and the places where it existed ; with transporting it from one quarter to another, and providing for the subsistence of the armies, and the furnishing them with the means of transport.¹

Speculation of every sort—even the gambling of the Bourse—was towards the close of the Reign of Terror almost at an end. The bankers and merchants, accused

¹ Decree, Sept. 29. Hist. Parl. xxix. p. 12, 13. Th. v. 404, 406.

* “Je demande que pour faire cesser les attroupemens à la porte des boulangers, enfin pour que les mères de famille puissent être débarrassées de tant d'oppression où elles sont depuis longtemps, *en allant chercher leur pain dès les quatre heures du matin* ; que la municipalité de Paris fasse former un tableau à douze colonnes pour tous les mois de l'année, au bas duquel il y aura un certificat qui attestera la quantité de pain à délivrer au porteur.”—*Paroles de GUÉROULT ; Débats des Jacobins*, 30 Oct. 1793.

on all sides of elevating prices, and seeing some of their number daily led out to the scaffold, deserted the Exchange, and sought for an asylum in the solitude of their homes. Industry and activity entirely ceased—every one, intent only on self-preservation, and fearful of endangering life if he was thought to be making money, remained in sullen inactivity, either enduring or affecting poverty. The aspect of France was that of universal destitution. One would have thought that the whole wealth, which centuries of industry had accumulated, had suddenly been swallowed up. The Company of the Indies,¹ the last existing mercantile establishment, was abolished; government resolved to leave no investment for capital but the purchase of the national domains.¹

Nor was it only on the opulent classes that the revolutionary enactments pressed with severity; they were equally oppressive to the poorest. Never, in truth, had the labouring poor been subjected to so many and such vexatious restraints, or obedience to them enforced by such numerous and sanguinary punishments. No one ventured to indulge in any luxury, or allow himself any gratification. Metallic currency had almost disappeared, and the poor received their wages merely in paper assignats, with which they were unable to purchase even the necessaries of life, from the enormous extent of their depreciation. Liable to the guillotine if they either sold above the maximum, or refused to take the assignats at their legal and forced value—ten times their intrinsic worth—the dealers had no resource but to close their shops, and become mendicants, like their customers, at the offices where provisions were distributed. If they were shopkeepers, they were compelled to sell at a fictitious price; if they were purchasers, they were under the necessity of buying the most wretched articles, because the best were withdrawn by the effect of the forced sales enjoined by government.² Only one kind of bread, of the blackest and coarsest kind, was to be had, and that could be ob-

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

69.

Grinding
oppression
on the in-
dustrious
classes.¹ Deux

Amis, xii.

147, 149.

Th. v. 409,

410.

70.

And on the
poor.² Décret de
la Commune
de Paris,
25 Déc.1793. Deux
Amis, xii.

177-185,

and Hist.

Parl. xxxi.

47.

Th. v.

435.

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

tained in no other way but by receiving tickets from the revolutionary committees, and waiting half the night, or for hours during the day, at the doors of the bakers, with a rope in the hand. The names of the weights and measures, of the days and months, were changed; the labouring poor had only three Sundays in the month, instead of four; the consolations of religion, the worship of the Deity, were at an end.

71.
Their desti-
tute and
deplorable
condition.

March 5,
1794.

Feb. 15.

All the efforts of the Committee of Public Salvation, after some time, became insufficient to procure an adequate supply of subsistence. Commerce escaped the ruinous law of the maximum, and it escaped it in the most disastrous of all ways—by a total cessation. Want of the severest kind was experienced in every branch of human consumption; the ordinary supplies of butcher-meat failed, and as it could still be publicly sold only at the maximum, the butchers exposed only the most unwholesome kind of food, and reserved the better sort for clandestine sale.* The evil soon extended to other articles; vegetables, fruits, eggs, butter, and fish, disappeared from the markets. Bands of persons travelled far on the high-roads, and met them as they were approaching Paris, where they were clandestinely purchased at prices far above the maximum, for the use of the opulent classes. The people were animated with the most violent indignation at these practices, and, to put a stop to them, the Commune enacted that no butchers should be permitted to go out to meet the cattle on their way to the markets; that no meat should be bought or sold but at the established stalls; and that no crowd should be allowed to collect round the bakers' doors before six in the morning, instead of three, the time

* “Mais vous, *hommes insensibles, qu'on appelle bouchers*, vous devenez les perfides instrumens des contrerévolutionnaires. Le pauvre qui se présente chez vous, rejeté, humilié, n'en emporte que des os de rebut; tandis que le riche qui se rit des souffrances des autres est accueilli avec une politesse recherchée, trouve la plus belle tranche, les morceaux les plus délicats, parce qu'il paye.”—*Proclamation du Comité de Surveillance de Paris, 5 Mars 1794; Hist. Parl. xxxii. 4, 5.*

when they usually began to assemble. These regulations, like all the others, failed of effect ; the crowds were just as great and as clamorous round the bakers' shops as before : violent tumults constantly arose among those who had got possession of the ropes at their doors ; and, as a last resource, the government was preparing to lay out the gardens of the Tuileries, of the Luxembourg, and of all the opulent persons round Paris, in the cultivation of garden stuffs.¹

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxii. 459.
Th. vi. 146,
151.

At length the evils arising from the maximum became so excessive that the inhabitants of Paris were obliged to be put on a limited allowance of animal food. The Commission for Provisions fixed the daily consumption at 75 oxen, 150 quintals of mutton and veal, and 200 hogs. All the animals intended for the consumption of the metropolis were brought to a public market-place, where alone meat was allowed to be sold ; and the butchers were only allowed to deliver every five days half a pound of meat to each family for each head. The same *cartes de sûreté* were issued by the revolutionary committees for this scanty aid, as for the rations of bread. Shortly after, the supply of wood and charcoal was found to fail, and laws were passed, preventing any one from having in store more than a very limited quantity of these necessary articles. Lastly, the Convention, in February 1794, proclaimed a *general fast* for six weeks so far as butcher-meat was concerned. "Decree the fast I propose," said Barère, "or it will come in spite of you. We shall soon have neither meat nor candles. The oxen which are killed just now have not enough of suet in them to make candles for their own slaughtering."² *

72.
People of
Paris put
on reduced
rations.
Fresh arbitrary
taxation of the
opulent.
Feb. 21, 22.

² Decree,
Feb. 21.
Hist. Parl.
xxxii. 9, 10,
and Moniteur,
5th March. Th.
vi. 310, 314.

The preceding details, all purposely taken from official documents and decrees of the Republican writers of France, and especially from their avowed and able leader and historian, M. Thiers, demonstrate that the picture

73.
Mr Burke's
description
of France at
this period.

* The cattle in Paris, by a regulation of the police, are all slaughtered at four A.M.

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XIV.
1793.

drawn by a contemporary writer was not overcharged, and that the genius of Mr Burke had justly discerned, amid the transports of democracy, the galling bondage it was inflicting on mankind. "The state of France," says he, "is perfectly simple. It consists of but two descriptions ; the oppressors and the oppressed. The first have the whole authority of the state in their hands ; all the arms, all the revenues of the public, all the confiscations of individuals and corporations. They have taken the lower sort from their occupations, and have put them into pay, that they may form them into a body of janisaries to overrule and awe property. The heads of these wretches they have never suffered to cool. They supply them with a food for fury varied by the day, besides the sensual state of intoxication from which they are rarely free. They have made the priests and people formally abjure the Divinity ; they have estranged them from every civil, moral, and social, or even natural and instinctive sentiment, habit, and practice, and have rendered them systematically savages, to make it impossible for them to be the instruments of any sober and virtuous arrangement, or to be reconciled to any state of order, under any name whatsoever. The other description—the oppressed—are people of some property : they are the small relics of the persecuted landed interest ; they are the burghers and the farmers. By the very circumstance of their being of some property, though numerous in some points of view, they cannot be very considerable as a number. In cities, the nature of their occupations renders them domestic and feeble ; in the country, it confines them to their farm for subsistence. The national guards are all changed and reformed. Everything suspicious in the description of which they were composed is rigorously disarmed. Committees, called of vigilance and safety, are everywhere formed—a most severe and scrutinising inquisition, far more rigid than anything ever known or imagined. Two persons cannot meet and

confer without hazard to their liberty, and even to their lives. Numbers scarcely credible have been executed, and their property confiscated. At Paris, and in most other towns, the bread they buy is a daily dole, which they cannot obtain without a daily ticket delivered to them by their masters. Multitudes of all ages and sexes are actually imprisoned. I have reason to believe, that in France there are not, for various state crimes, so few as twenty thousand actually in jail—a large proportion of people of property in any state.* If a father of a family should show any disposition to resist, or to withdraw himself from their power, his wife and children are cruelly to answer for it. It is by means of these hostages that they keep the troops, which they force by masses (as they call it) into the field, true to their colours. Another of their resources is not to be forgotten. They have lately found a way of giving a sort of ubiquity to the supreme sovereign authority, which no monarch has been able yet to give to any representative of his. The commissioners of the National Convention, who are the members of the Convention itself, and really exercise all its powers, make continual circuits through every province, and visits to every army. There they supersede all the ordinary authorities, civil and military, and change and alter everything at their pleasure. So that, in effect, no deliberative capacity exists in any portion of the inhabitants.”[†]

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XIV.

1793.

¹ Burke's
Works, vii.
135.

In the midst of all these extraordinary and unprecedented changes in society, however, the moral laws of nature were unceasingly working, and preparing, amid the present triumph of wickedness, its final and condign punishment. Divisions, as usual, had sprung up in the

74.
Mutual
estrangement
of the
Dantonists
and ruling
power.

* How much was this within the truth! When Mr Burke said this, in spring 1794, the prisoners in France exceeded 200,000. Even his ardent imagination fell immeasurably short of the real atrocities of the Reign of Terror.

† Burke on the Policy of the Allies.

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victorious body on the destruction of their opponents. Two parties remained opposed, on different principles, to the Decemvirs, whose destruction was indispensable to the full establishment of their despotic authority. These parties were the Moderates and the Anarchists. At the head of the former were Danton and Camille Desmoulins; the latter was supported by the powerful municipality of Paris. It has been already observed, that Danton and his party were strangers to the real objects of the revolt on 31st May. They aided the populace in the struggle with the Convention; but they had no intention of establishing the oligarchy which directed, and finally triumphed by their exertions. After the overthrow of the Girondists, Robespierre urged Danton to retire to the country. "A tempest is arising," said he; "the Jacobins have not forgot your relations with Dumourier. They hate your manners; your voluptuous and indolent habits are at variance with their austere disposition and undying energy. Withdraw for a little; trust to a friend, who will watch over your danger, and warn you of the first moment to return." Danton followed his advice, nothing loath to get quit of a faction of which he began to dread the excesses; and his party was entirely excluded from the Dictatorial Government.¹

¹ Lac. Pr.
Hist. ii. 91.
Mig. ii. 300,
301.

75.
Principles
of the Dan-
tonists.

The leaders of the Moderates were Danton, Phillippeaux, Camille Desmoulins, Fabre d'Eglantine, and Westermann, the tried commander on 10th August. Their principles were, that terror was to be used only for the establishment of freedom, not made an instrument of oppression in the hands of those who had gained it; they wished above all things that the Republicans should remain masters of the field of battle, but, having done so, they proposed to use their victory with moderation. In pursuance of these principles, they reprobated the violent proceedings of the Dictators, after the victory of 31st May had insured the triumph of the populace; desired to humble the Anarchists of the municipality, to put an

end to the Revolutionary Tribunal, discharge from confinement those imprisoned as suspected persons, and dissolve the despotic committees of government. They had been all-powerful with the multitude, as long as they urged on their excesses, but their influence had sensibly declined since they had withdrawn from an active part in public life, and were no longer to be seen, at the Jacobins or the Cordeliers, hounding on the people to deeds of violence or murder. The blasting reputation of *moderatism* had not only already undermined their power, but threatened to bring them to the scaffold.¹

The other party, that of the municipality, carried their ambition and extravagance even beyond the Decemvirs. Instead of government, they professed a desire to establish an extreme local democracy; instead of religion, the consecration of materialism. As usual in democratic contests, they pushed their revolutionary principles beyond the dominant faction, and strove thus to supplant them in the affections of the populace. They had witnessed, with extreme dissatisfaction, the committees usurp all the powers of government after the revolt of 31st May, and thus reap for themselves all the fruits of the victory which the forces of their opponents had mainly contributed to achieve. They had flattered themselves that their weight, as the head of the powerful municipality of Paris, having the whole armed force of the capital at their command, would have been sufficient to have established them in all the offices of government; but they had been outwitted by Robespierre and the Committee of Public Salvation, who, equal to themselves in democratic energy and popular arts, were far their superiors in talent, and had the great advantage of being in possession of a preponderating influence in the Convention. Hence they strove to supplant them in the favour of the people by still louder professions of popular zeal, and the open avowal of irreligious opinions.² Hence the orgies of the Goddess of Reason, and other indecent mummeries, with which they

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¹ Deux
Amis, xii.
127, 129.
Th. vi. 6, 7.
Lac. Pr.
Hist. ii. 91.
Mig. ii. 301.

76.
Principles of
Hébert and
the Anarch-
ists.

² Hist. Parl.
xxx. 206,
207. Th. ii.
298. Mig. ii.
298. Toul.
vii. 286.
Journal de la
Montagne,
No. 158.

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captivated the populace of Paris, but, in the eyes of its abler and less selfish leaders, disgraced the Revolution. In cruelty, obscenity, and atheism, they exceeded the Dictatorial Government; but these were only means to an end. In the passion for tyrannical power, they yielded to none, provided only it was wielded by themselves.

77.
Mutual re-
proaches of
the Danton-
ists and An-
archists.

These two parties, as usual in civil dissensions, mutually reproached each other with the public calamities. The Anarchists incessantly charged the Moderates with corruption, and being the secret agents of foreign courts. The treason of Dumourier, who had been on terms of intimacy with Danton, was also made the subject of impassioned invective. "It is you," replied the Dantonists, "who are the real accomplices of the stranger; everything draws you towards them, both the common violence of your language, and the joint design to overturn the whole institutions of France. Behold the magistracy, which arrogates to itself more than legislative authority; which regulates everything—police, subsistence, worship; which has substituted a new religion for the old one; replaced one superstition by another still more absurd; which openly preaches atheism, and causes itself to be imitated by all the municipalities in France. Consider those war-offices, from whence so many extortioners issue, who carry desolation into the provinces, and discredit the Revolution by their conduct. Observe the municipality and the committees—what do they propose to themselves, if it is not to usurp the executive and legislative authority, to dispossess the Convention, and dissolve the government? Who could suggest such a design but the external enemies of France?"¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxx. 215,
217. Th.
vi. 10, 11.
Deux Amis,
xii. 84, 86.

78.
Publication
of the Vieux
Cordelier.

Camille Desmoulins, in his celebrated publication, entitled "*Le Vieux Cordelier*," drew, under a professed description of Rome under the Emperors, a striking picture of the horrors of that gloomy period. "Everything," said

he, "under that terrible government was made the groundwork of suspicion. Has a citizen popularity? He is a rival of the Dictator, who might create disturbances. Does he avoid society, and live retired by his fireside? That is to ruminate in private on sinister designs. Is he rich? That renders the danger the greater, that he will corrupt the citizens by his largesses. Is he poor? None so dangerous as those who have nothing to lose. Is he thoughtful and melancholy? He is revolving what he calls the calamities of his country. Is he gay and dissipated? He is concealing, like Cæsar, ambition under the mask of pleasure. Is he virtuous and austere? He has constituted himself the censor of the government. Is he a philosopher, an orator, and a poet? He will soon acquire more consideration than the rulers of the state. Has he acquired reputation in war? His talents only render him the more formidable, and make it indispensable to get quit of his authority. The natural death of a celebrated man is become so rare, that historians transmit it as a matter worthy of record to future ages. Even the loss of so many great and good citizens seems a less calamity than the insolence and scandalous fortune of their denouncers. Every day the accuser makes his triumphal entry into the palace of death, and reaps the rich harvest which is presented to his hands. The tribunals, once the protectors of life and property, have become the organs of butchery, where robbery and murder have usurped the names of confiscation and punishment."¹ Such is the picture drawn of the result of popular government by the man who was called the first apostle of liberty! And how striking the coincidence, that in drawing with the pencil of Tacitus a picture of Roman servitude under Nero and Caligula, he was exhibiting a portrait, which none could fail to recognise, of France, under the government which his own democratic transports had contributed to impose upon its inhabitants.

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¹ Vieux
Cordelier,
Rév. Mém.
xlii. p. 50,
51, 53.

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79.

Efforts of
Danton to
detach
Robespierre
from the
municipa-
lity.1 Mig. ii.
305, 307.
Lac. Pr.
Hist. ii.
136, 138.
Vieux Cor-
delier, 73.
Journal de
la Mont.
No. 158.

Danton and his friends made the greatest efforts to detach Robespierre from the sanguinary faction with which he had so long acted, and at first with some appearance of success. The Convention, under his direction, had passed several decrees for the succour of the destitute, and for the establishment of a general system of public instruction, though the general confusion and corruption of inferior functionaries had prevented their being carried into execution. He had taken some steps towards a moderate government; in the Convention he had publicly stopped the trial of the seventy-three deputies, who were detained in prison in consequence of having protested against the arrest of the Girondists. He had reprobated the ultra-revolutionary measures of Hébert and the municipality, and strongly condemned the anti-religious mummeries which had been acted in the Convention and Notre-Dame. He had not only read but corrected the proof-sheets of the "Vieux Cordelier," where he was adjured in the most touching language to embrace the sentiments of humanity.* The *Journal de la Montagne*—a journal entirely under his direction—had brought forward an able article on the existence of a Supreme Being, and the favourable influence of such a belief in a republican community.^{1†} Already his popularity, in

* "O mon cher Robespierre ! c'est à toi que j'adresse ici la parole : car j'ai vu le moment où Pitt n'avait plus que toi à vaincre, où sans toi le navire Argo périssait, la République entraînait dans le chaos, et la société des Jacobins et la Montagne devenaient une Tour de Babel. Robespierre, toi dont la postérité relira les discours éloquentes ! souviens-toi de ces leçons de l'histoire et de la philosophie, que l'amour est plus fort, plus durable que la crainte ; que l'admiration et la religion attirent des bienfaits ; que les actes de clémence sont l'échelle du mensonge, comme nous dirait Tertullien, par laquelle les membres du Comité du Salut Public se sont élevés jusqu'au ciel, et qu'on n'y monta jamais sur des marches ensanglantées ! Déjà tu viens de t'approcher beaucoup de cette idée dans la mesure que tu as fait décréter aujourd'hui dans la séance du décadi 30 Frimaire."—*Vieux Cordelier*, 70, 71 ; LAMARTINE, *Hist. des Girondins*, vii. 394.

† As this is the extreme point of the extravagance of the Revolution, and the one when a reaction began from the effect of its own principles, the following extracts from the leading journals of the Anarchists, and of Robespierre, at the time, are well deserving of attention :—

In the journal of the former, it was stated—"Le hazard seul pouvait déter-

consequence, was on the wane. He was accused of *Moderatism*, and the groups of the Jacobins began to murmur at his proceedings.

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In truth, the Revolution had now reached its culminating point—THE REACTION HAD BEGUN. Robespierre, with all his fanaticism in favour of democracy, perceived, as strongly as any man in France, the necessity both of some religious impressions to act as a curb upon the passions of the people, and of a strong central government to check their excesses. He early felt a horror at the infidel atrocities of the municipality, and saw that such principles, if persisted in, would utterly disorganise society throughout the Republic. When Hébert, Chaumette, and the chiefs of the municipality, appeared in the Convention with the Goddess of Reason and the troop of opera-dancers, Robespierre and St Just were observed to cast a look of indignation on the scene, and, rising up, they left the Assembly. That was the commencement of the revolution in favour of order and religion. Mark-worthy circumstance! The series of causes and effects which overthrew the Revolution which had sprung from the atheistical doctrines of the philosophers, began with the practical application of those very doctrines themselves.¹

80.

Culminating point of the Revolution.

¹ Duval, Souv. de la Terreur, iv. 143, 144.

In accordance with the sanguinary spirit of the times,

miner un enfant pour la Quakerie, la Juderie, la Réforme, ou la Catholicité : il est plus que présumable que sa tête restera vide de toute religion, jusqu'à ce qu'il s'en bâtisse une lui-même, si cela l'arrange un jour ; et ce sera un des prodiges les plus efficaces de tous pour consolider l'édifice de notre liberté : car il n'y a pas de nation libre avec des préjugés ; et l'on sait combien le secours des prêtres fut utile aux rois. Voltaire a dit, ' Si Dieu n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer ; ' cette maxime ne pourrait être trop payée dans une monarchie ; mais dans une république, et au moyen de l'éducation nationale, moi je dis, ' Si mon fils veut des dieux, il faut qu'il les invente. ' — *La Feuille du Salut Public*, 1 Novembre 1793.

In the *Journal de la Montagne*, Number 153, it was answered evidently by the hand of Robespierre, though the article bears the signature of Charles Leveaux :—" L'auteur dit assez clairement que l'opinion de l'existence d'un Dieu est utile à une monarchie, et que l'athéisme convient aux républiques. Cette assertion est absolument fausse, et démentie par toute l'histoire. Deux choses sont pernicieuses et fatales au genre humain—deux choses tendant

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81.

First indication of an intention by Robespierre to destroy the Anarchists.
Nov. 21.

Robespierre resolved to begin the necessary reforms by the extermination of the Anarchists. The first indication of this determination appeared in his speech at the Jacobin Club on the 21st of November. "Let men," said he, "animated by a pure zeal, lay upon the altar of their country the useless and pompous monuments of superstition; but by what title does hypocrisy come here to mingle its influence with that of patriotism? What right have men, hitherto unknown in the career of the Revolution, to come into the midst of you, to seek in passing events a false popularity, to hurry on the patriots to fatal measures, and to throw among them the seeds of trouble and discord? By what title do they disturb the existing worship in the name of Liberty, and attack fanaticism by a band of another kind of fanatics? One would suppose, from the manner in which these men agree, that the Convention had proscribed the Catholic faith. It has done no such thing: it has, on the contrary, by a solemn decree, established the liberty of worship. It will alike proscribe the ministers of religion who disturb, and protect those who respect, the public peace. It is the Royalist, not the Catholic priesthood whom it has with justice persecuted. We have heard of priests being denounced for having said the mass: they will only say it the longer for being disturbed. He who

également à la destruction de la société humaine—l'athéisme et la superstition: mais l'idée de l'existence d'un Etre Suprême fut de tout temps la base de toute vertu civile, politique, domestique. Ceux qui jetèrent les fondemens de la république Romaine avaient le plus grand respect pour une Intelligence Suprême: et l'attachement sublime et inviolable des Romains aux sermons est un des moyens qui a le plus contribué à leur donner ce caractère mâle, intrépide, et courageux, source de toutes les grandes actions qui feront toujours le sujet de notre admiration. Mais il était athée le sénat de Rome, lorsqu'il eut la bassesse de vendre à César la dictature perpétuelle—il était athée lorsqu'il rampa lâchement sous Auguste, le bourreau de la liberté; et c'est sous le règne de l'athéisme qu'on voit dominer sur le genre humain un Tibère, un Néron, un Caligule—qui détruisirent sur la terre jusqu'à la moindre étincelle de la liberté. L'idée d'une Intelligence Suprême, qui dirige et qui est elle-même l'ordre qui règne dans l'univers, doit être la base de toute instruction civile, de toute société humaine, de toute instruction publique."—*Journal de la Montagne*, 9 Novembre 1793, No. 158.

would prevent them is more fanatical than he who celebrates the ceremony. There are men who would go farther—who, under the pretence of destroying superstition, would establish athiesm itself. Every philosopher, every individual, is at liberty to adopt whatever opinion he pleases : whoever imputes it to him as a crime is a fool ; but the legislature would be a thousand times more blameable, which should act on such a system. The Convention abhors all such attempts. It is no maker of metaphysical theories, but a popular body charged with causing, not only the rights, but the character of the French people to be respected. It is not in vain that it has proclaimed the rights of man and the liberty of conscience. Atheism is an aristocratic belief. The idea of a Supreme Being, who watches over oppressed innocence, and punishes triumphant crime, is, and ever will be, popular. The people, the unfortunate, will ever applaud it ; it will never find detractors but among the rich and the guilty. I have been since my youth but an indifferent Catholic ; but I have neither been a cold friend nor a lukewarm defender of humanity. I am even more strongly attached to moral and political truth than I have hitherto divulged. *If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.*^{1*}

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¹ Journal
des Jaco-
bins, No.
544, Nov.
21. Th.
vi. 15, 17.

But while thus preparing the way for the destruction of the Anarchists, Robespierre saw that it was necessary to make a sacrifice to the revolutionary party, in order to avoid the blasting imputation of moderation, and keep up his reputation for unflinching resolution and incorruptible integrity. For this purpose he resolved, at the same time that he should cut off Hébert, Chaumette, and the Anarchists, to strike with equal severity against Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and the Moderate party. By so doing, he would keep up the appearance of even-handed justice, establish the supremacy of the Committee

82.
Robespierre
and St Just
resolve to
destroy both
the Danton-
ists and the
Anarchists.

* “Si Dieu n’existait pas, il faudrait l’inventer.”—Voltaire was the original author of this striking expression.

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of Public Salvation over all the factions in the state, and remove the only rival that stood between him and sole dominion.* But, though determined to destroy both, Robespierre was careful to avoid striking them at the same time. He had need of the one to aid him in effecting the ruin of the other. He even went so far as, at a political dinner at Duplay, where he met Hébert, to insinuate to him, that a triumverate, composed of Danton, Hébert, and himself, could alone save the Republic. Hébert rejected the proposal, however—saying that he could play only the part of the Aristophanes of the people. Hébert's wife, when they had gone, expressed her fears that such a proposal made and rejected would give mortal offence. "Reassure yourself," said Hébert, "I fear neither Danton nor Robespierre; let them come and seek me in the midst of the municipality, if they dare." At this moment the destruction of both Danton and himself was resolved on. But while these ambitious or envious motives were not without their influence in suggesting this bold and exterminating policy, yet were Robespierre and St Just, in adopting it, not without the impulse of public and elevated motives. They believed in good faith, and not without some show of reason, that the parties in the state, of which those leaders were the representatives, were alike dangerous to Republican institutions; the one by urging them on to anarchy, the other by paving the way for a return to monarchy.¹ Stern advance, unrelenting severity, entire destruction of all classes above the people in rank, wealth, or knowledge, appeared to these ruthless fanatics the only real

¹ Th. vi.
186, 187.
Hist. Parl.
xxx. 209,
216. Lam.
Hist. des
Gir. vii. 397.

* "Envieux l'un de l'autre, ils mènent tout par brigues,
Que leur ambition tourne en sanglantes lîgues.
Ainsi de Marius Sylla devint jaloux,
César de mon aïeul, Marc Antoine de vous :
Ainsi la liberté ne peut plus être utile
Qu'à former les fureurs d'une guerre civile,
Lorsque par un désordre à l'univers fatal
L'un ne veut point de maître, et l'autre point d'égal."

Cinna, Act ii. scene 1.

preparation for republican equality and virtue. But they were equally inexorable against the atheism which would corrupt, the vices which would degrade it. In their mistaken views of human nature they believed that, when the leaders of both were guillotined, nothing would remain to prevent the general establishment of republican principles, simplicity, virtue, and happiness.*

Though ignorant that his destruction had been resolved on by the all-powerful Committee of Public Salvation, Danton was aware that for some months his popularity had been waning; and he returned to Paris, and loudly demanded at the Jacobins that the grounds of complaint should be exhibited against him. "I have heard," said he, "of rumours of accusations directed against me. I demand an opportunity of justifying myself in the eyes of the people. It will not be a difficult task. I call upon those who have been murmuring against me to specify their charges, for I will answer them in public. I perceived, when I ascended the tribune, a murmur of dissatisfaction prevail. Have I then lost the characteristics of a free man? Am I not the same as I was at your side in the days of alarm? Have you not all frequently embraced me as a friend who was ready to die with you? For your sake have I not been overwhelmed by persecutions? I have been one of the most intrepid supporters of Marat; I invoke the shade of the Friend of the people to bear witness in my behalf. You would be astonished if you knew my private affairs; and the colossal fortune which my enemies and yours ascribe to me, is found to be reduced to the slender patrimony I have always possessed. I defy my detractors to prove against me any crime. All their efforts will be unable to shake me: I remain erect before the people. You will judge me in their presence.¹

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1793.

83.
Danton's
speech on
returning
to the Ja-
cobins.
Dec. 3.

* In Robespierre's speeches, and those of St Just, in November and December 1793, at the Jacobins and in the Convention, the clearest proof of their being actuated by these principles is to be found.—See *Histoire Parlementaire*, xxx. 209-468.

¹ Journal
des Jaco-
bins, No.
550, 3 Déc.
Hist. Parl.
xxx. 327,
328.

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XIV.

1793.

84.
Robes-
pierre's
perfidious
speech in
regard to
him.

I cannot tear a page from my history, without tearing a page from theirs ; and that too from the most glorious period of the annals of liberty."

Robespierre instantly ascended the tribune. "Danton," said he, "demands a commission to examine into his conduct : I consent to it, if he thinks it can be of any service to him. He demands a statement of the grounds of complaint against him : I agree to it. Danton, you are accused of being an emigrant ; of having retired to Switzerland ; of having feigned illness to conceal your flight ; of being desirous to become Regent under Louis XVII. ; of having made arrangements at a fixed time to proclaim that remnant of the Capets ; of being the chief of a counter-revolutionary conspiracy ; of being a worse enemy to France than either Pitt or Cobourg, England, Austria, or Prussia ; of having filled the Mountain with your creatures. It is said that we need not disquiet ourselves about the inferior agents of foreign powers ; that their conspiracies merit only contempt ; but you, you alone, should be led out to the scaffold !" Loud applauses followed this bold declaration ; when they had subsided, he continued, turning to his astonished rival—"Do you not know, Danton, that the more a man is gifted with energy and public spirit, the more the public enemies conspire for his overthrow ? Do you not know, does not every one who hears me know, that that is an infallible test of real virtue ? If the defender of liberty was not calumniated, it would be a proof that we had no longer either generals, or priests, or nobles to fear." He then demanded that all those who had anything to allege against Danton should come forward ; but none, after such a declaration, ventured to say a word. Upon that, amidst the applause of the meeting, Danton received the fraternal embrace from the president. By this hypocritical conduct, Robespierre both ascertained the extent of the public feeling against his great rival, and threw him off his guard by feigned expressions of regard.¹

¹Hist. Parl.
xxx. 328,
329. Th.
vi. 21, 22.
Journ. des
Jacobins,
No. 550.

On the very next day, a new decree, augmenting the despotic powers of the Committee of Public Salvation, was passed. "Anarchy," said Billaud Varennes, in the preamble of the report on which the decree was founded, "menaces every republic, alike in its cradle and its old age. Our part is to strive against it." On this preamble, the decree enacted that a bulletin of the laws should be drawn up ; that four individuals should have the exclusive right of framing it ; that it should be printed on a particular paper and type, and sent down to the provinces by post. The Convention was at the same time declared the "Centre of Impulsion of Government,"—a dubious phrase, under which was veiled the despotic authority of the committees. The authority of the departmental assemblies was abolished for everything except matters of local administration ; and they were forbidden, under pain of death, to correspond on any political matter with each other, raise forces or taxes of their own authority, or correspond with or receive instructions from any body but the committees at Paris. Thus the liberties of the provinces were rapidly perishing under the despotic sway of the Committee of Public Salvation. All the powers of government, which by former decrees were vested in different bodies, were by this decree centred in that terrible committee. It alone was directed to conduct the foreign diplomacy, to appoint generals, admirals, and ambassadors, and the whole constituted authorities were ordered to correspond with it, and receive their instructions from it alone. Supported by the Jacobin Club, of which Robespierre had now got the entire direction, and by all the affiliated clubs over France, this despotic power was now established on a solid basis : for it rested on the ardent democrats, who at once directed the magistracies and influenced the armies. The government was powerful, for the time irresistible ; for the executive was in harmony both with the legislature and the whole depositaries of local popular power.¹ A despotism had grown up out of

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XIV.

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85.

Increase of
the powers
of govern-
ment.

Dec. 4.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxx. 254,
263. Deux
Amis, xi.
192, 207.

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XIV.

1793.

86.
Attacks of
the Danton-
ists on the
Anarchists.

the very excess of liberty. France was already beginning to enter the bloody path which leads from democratic anarchy to regular government.

Meanwhile, the strife of the Dantonists and Anarchists became daily more conspicuous, and the sanguinary disposition of the latter seemed, if possible, to increase in violence. One of their number, Ronsin, had affixed over the walls of Paris a placard, in which he declared, that out of a hundred and forty thousand souls in Lyons, fifteen hundred only were not accomplices of the revolt in that city, and that before February all the guilty should perish, and their bodies be floated by the Rhone to Toulon. Chaumette loudly maintained that the gangrened part of the Convention should be lopped off, and sent numerous petitioners with demands to that effect to the Assembly. Camille Desmoulins vigorously attacked this atrocious faction, and in an especial manner fastened on the infamous Hébert, whom he accused of being "a miserable intriguer, a caterer for the guillotine, a traitor paid by Pitt; a wretch who had received 200,000 francs at different times, from almost all the factions in the Republic, to calumniate their adversaries; a thief and robber, who had been expelled from being a lackey in the theatre for theft, and now aimed at drenching France with blood by means of his prostituted journal." Such was the man, on the testimony of the Revolutionists themselves, on whose evidence Marie Antoinette had been condemned by the Revolutionary Tribunal. "It is vain," he added, "to think of stifling my voice by threats of arrest. We all know that the Anarchists are preparing a new revolt, like the 31st May; but we may say with Brutus and Cicero, 'We too much fear exile, poverty, and death.'¹ When our soldiers are daily braving death in sight of the enemy's batteries in the cause of freedom, shall we, their unworthy leaders, be intimidated by the menaces of the Père Duchesne, or prevented by him from achieving a still greater victory over the ultra-Revolutionists, who would

¹ Vieux Cor-
delier, Nos.
3, 4, and 5.
Hist. Parl.
xxxi. 202,
232. Lam.
Hist. des
Gir. vii. 398.

ruin the Revolution, by staining every step it makes with gore?"

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While the parties were in this state of exasperation at each other, the Committee of Public Salvation boldly interposed between them, and resolved to make their discord the means of destroying both. Profiting with political dexterity by this singular situation of the parties, Robespierre and the members of the municipality came to an understanding, the condition of which was the mutual abandonment of their personal friends. Robespierre gave up Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and their supporters, to the vengeance of the municipality; and they surrendered Hébert, Chaumette, Ronsin, Cloutz, and their party, to the Decemvirs. By this arrangement more than one important object was gained—two formidable factions were destroyed, and a rival to the reputation of the dictator was removed. It seemed impossible to accuse the government of tending towards anarchy, when it had destroyed the atheistical faction in the municipality; and equally hopeless to charge it with moderation, when it had struck down, for leaning towards a return to humanity, the authors of the massacres of September. In this way they proposed to tread the narrow and perilous path between two equally powerful parties, and realise their favourite expression of making terror and virtue the order of the day. But Hébert and the Anarchists were still powerful, and the Committee of Public Salvation had need of support to effect their overthrow. With this view, they allowed Danton and Camille Desmoulins to imagine they were approximating to their principles, to gain their support in the destruction of the Anarchists, having previously resolved to follow it up by the ruin of themselves. This perfidious policy proved entirely successful, and this it was which afterwards drew from Danton the bitter exclamation—"To die is nothing; but to die the dupe of Robespierre!"¹

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87.

Secret
agreement
between
Robespierre
and the mu-
nicipality.

¹ Deux
Amis, xii.
102, 105.
Mig. ii. 306.
Th. vi. 186,
187. Lac.
ii. 139. Lam.
Hist. des
Gir. vii. 398.

The Committee of Public Salvation proceeded with

CHAP.
XIV.

1793.

88.

Purification
of the Jacobin
Club,
Dec. 15.

caution in acting against so powerful a faction as the Anarchists, headed by so weighty a body as the municipality of Paris. They began their operations by a purification, as it was called, of the Jacobin Club, which went on for several days in the middle of December. In the course of these discussions, Robespierre denounced Hébert in the most violent terms. He was at first expelled, and subsequently only re-admitted on his declaring that "the Gospel appeared to be a book of excellent morality; that all true Jacobins should follow its precepts; and that Jesus Christ was the founder of all popular societies." But Robespierre succeeded in excluding Anacharsis Clootz, a Prussian, who had acquired notoriety by styling himself "the orator of the human race." He did so by the never-failing device of representing him as the secret agent of the Allies.* At the same time that the leaders of the Anarchist faction were in this manner excluded by the all-powerful influence of Robespierre and the Committee of Public Salvation, Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Panis, Colombel, and all the other leaders of the Moderate party, were admitted. By this decisive measure the Anarchists were rendered wholly powerless in the Jacobins; and a severe blow was given to the weight of the municipality, by showing that its leading members were excluded from the ruling club of the Revolution, while their determined enemies were admitted, on the motion of Robespierre, amidst loud acclamation.¹ His speech on proposing Camille Desmoulins, considering the awful tragedy which

¹ Journal des Jacobins, Dec. 14 and 15. Nos. 555, 556. Lam. Hist. des Gir. vii. 398.

* "Vous avez vu Clootz," said Robespierre, "tantôt aux pieds du tyran et de la cour, tantôt aux genoux du peuple. Lorsqu'une faction liberticide dominait au milieu de vous, Clootz embrassa le parti de Brissot et de Dumourier. Le Prussien Clootz appuya leurs opinions avec frénésie; et qu'on attaqua l'univers. Eh bien! Clootz, nous connaissons tes visites et tes complots nocturnes. Nous savons que, couvert des ombres de la nuit, tu as préparé avec l'évêque Gobel cette mascarade philosophique. Paris fourmille d'intriguans, d'Anglais, et d'Autrichiens. Ils siègent au milieu de vous avec les agens de Frédéric. Clootz est un Prussien. Je vous ai tracé l'histoire de sa vie publique. Prononcez!" This speech sealed his doom.—See *Journal des Jacobins*, 15 Decembre 1793.

was fast approaching, is well worthy of consideration,* as indicating the profound perfidy by which he was animated. It was by this Machiavelian policy that Robespierre succeeded in finally destroying both sets of his opponents.

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Robespierre first announced his project of double vengeance in the Convention. "Without," said he, "all the tyrants of the earth are conspiring against you ; within, all their friends are aiding their efforts : they will continue to do so till hope is severed from crime. We must stifle the external and internal enemies of the Republic, or perish with it. In such circumstances, the only principles of government are to rule the people by the force of Reason, and their enemies by the force of Terror. The spring of a popular government in peace is Virtue ; in a revolution, it is Virtue and TERROR : Virtue, without which Terror is fatal—Terror, without which Virtue is impotent. The government of a revolution is the despotism of liberty against tyranny. The opposite factions with which we have to contend march under different banners, and by different routes ; but their object is the same—the disorganisation of the popular government and the triumph of tyranny. The one preaches fury, the other clemency ; the one tends to this object by its leaning to weakness, the other by its inclination to excess. The one would change liberty into a bacchanal, the other into a prostitute ; the one would transport you into the torrid, the other into the frozen zone. But both alike keep aloof from courage, justice, magnanimity of soul. It is not worth

89.
Announce-
ment of the
project in
the Conven-
tion.
Dec. 23.

* "Il faut," said Robespierre, "considérer Camille Desmoulins avec ses vertus et ses faiblesses. Quelquefois faible et confiant, souvent courageux, et toujours républicain, on l'a vu successivement l'ami de Lameth, de Mirabeau, de Dillon, mais on l'a vu aussi briser ces mêmes idoles qu'il avait encensées. Il les a sacrifiées sur l'autel qu'il leur avait élevé, aussitôt qu'il a reconnu leur perfidie. En un mot, il aimait la liberté par instinct et par sentiment, et n'a jamais aimé qu'elle, malgré les séductions puissantes de tous ceux qui la trahirent. J'engage Camille Desmoulins à poursuivre sa carrière ; mais à n'être plus aussi versatile, et à tâcher de ne plus se tromper sur le compte des hommes qui jouent un grand rôle sur la scène publique."—*Journal de Jacobins*, No. 556, 558, 15 Decembre 1793 ; and *Hist. Parl.* xxi. 340, 341.

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¹ Rapport de Robespierre, Dec. 23, 1793. Hist. Parl. xxx. 463, 469. Mig. ii. 307. Th. vi. 155, 156. Pap. inéd. trouv. chez Rob. ii. 49.

90.

Robespierre's speech in support of it.

while to try to distinguish ; what is really material is to appreciate them by their objects and their ends. In that respect, you will find that they are sufficiently near each other. The Republic must steer between these two shoals —impotence and excess. Tyrants have wished to throw us back into servitude by moderation ; sometimes they aim at the same object by driving us into the opposite extreme. These two extremes terminate in the same point. Whether they fall short or overshoot the mark, they equally miss it. The friend of kings and the orator of the human race understand each other perfectly. The fanatic covered with his relics, and the fanatic who preaches atheism, are closely allied. The democratic barons are twin-brothers of those at Coblenz ; and sometimes the *bonnets rouges* are nearer the *talons rouges* than would be at first imagined.¹

“ Foreign powers have vomited into France able villains, whom they retain in their pay. They deliberate in our administrations, insinuate themselves into our sections and our clubs, sit in the Convention, and eternally direct the counter-revolution by the same means. They flutter round us, extract by surprise our secrets, caress our passions, and seek to make us converts to their opinions. By turns they drive us to exaggeration or weakness ; excite in Paris the fanaticism of the new worship, and in La Vendée resistance to the old ; assassinate Marat and Lepelletier, and mingle with the group which would deify their remains : at one time spread plenty among the people, at another reduce them to all the horrors of famine ; circulate and withdraw the metallic currency, and thus occasion the extraordinary changes in the value of money ; profit, in fine, by every accident, to turn it against France and the Revolution.” Such is the invariable policy of revolutionary parties, to impute to strangers, or the opposite faction, the natural effect of their own passions and vices. This speech was ordered to be printed, and circulated over all France.² It was followed by a decree, sending Biron, Custine’s

² Hist. Parl. xxx. 465, 466. Th. vi. 120, 121.

son, Dietrich, mayor of Strassburg, and all the friends of Dumourier, Custine, and Houchard, to the Revolutionary Tribunal, from whence they were soon after conducted to the scaffold.

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“Citizens,” said St Just, some time after, “you wish a republic; if you are not prepared at the same time to wish for what constitutes it, you will be buried under its ruins. Now, what constitutes a republic *is the destruction of everything which opposes it*. You are culpable towards the Republic if you have pity on the captives; you are culpable if you do not support virtue; you are culpable if you do not support terror. What do you propose, you who would not strike terror into the wicked? What do you propose, you who would sever virtue from happiness? You shall perish, you who only act the patriot till bought by the stranger, or placed in office by the government; you of the indulgent faction who would save the wicked; you of the foreign faction, who would be severe only on the friends of freedom. Measures are already taken; you are surrounded. Thanks to the genius of France, Liberty has risen victorious from one of the greatest dangers she ever encountered; the terror she will strike into her enemies will for ever purge the earth of the conspirators. We are accused of cruelty; but we are humane in comparison of other governments. A monarchy floats on the blood of thirty generations, and shall you hesitate to punish the guilty of one? Do we experience reverses? the indulgent prophesy calamities: Are we prosperous? they never mention our successes. You are more occupied with pamphlets than the Republic.* You demand the opening of the prisons: you might as well demand at once the misery and destruction of the people. The same conspiracy is now striving to save the guilty which formerly strove to save the tyrant. A monarchy does not consist in a king, but in crime; a republic not in a senate, but in virtue.¹ Whoever would

91.
Remarkable
speech to
the same
effect, by
St Just.
March 2,
1794.

¹ Parl. Hist.
xxxi. 385,
391. Deux
Amis, xii.
115, 116.
Mig. ii. 309.
Lac. ii. 145.

* Alluding to the *Vieux Cordelier* of Camille Desmoulins, recently published.

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spare crime is striving to restore the monarchy : spare the aristocracy, and you will have thirty years of civil war : those who make revolutions by halves only dig their own graves." The Convention, awed by the tyrants, invested the committees with full power to crush the conspiracies. They decreed, in addition, that *Terror and Virtue* should be the order of the day.

92.
Proscription
of the Anar-
chists.

The Anarchists were the first to feel the vengeance of their former supporters. They in vain endeavoured to rouse their ancient partisans in the commune to support their cause ; terror had frozen every heart. As the danger became more menacing, they openly organised a revolt, and strove to the very uttermost to rouse the immense population of Paris for their support. Their leaders made extraordinary efforts to excite the people to insurrection ; and innumerable placards, ascribing the whole public evils, and in particular the famine which prevailed, to the Convention, appeared in the markets, and in all the populous quarters of Paris. The statue of Liberty was covered with crape at the club of the Cordeliers, where they had taken refuge since their expulsion from the Jacobins ; and insurrection openly prevailed on the 4th March. They even went so far as to propose that the whole Convention should be dissolved, a new one assembled, a dictator named, and an executive government organised. But all the efforts of Hébert, with his infamous journal—*Momoro*, with the resolutions of the Section Marat, which he had roused to espouse their cause—and Vincent, with his frenzied followers, could not produce a popular movement. The municipality held back ; the Jacobins were ruled by the Committee of Public Salvation and Robespierre. In all the sections, except that of Marat, hesitation and division of opinion prevailed. Fear of the terrible energy of the Committee of Public Salvation paralysed every arm. Seeing public opinion, after a few days, sufficiently pronounced, Robespierre acted. On the night of the 12th,

March 12.

the whole leaders of the Anarchists were arrested by their former agent, Henriot, at the head of the armed force which they had so often wielded against the government, and sent before the Revolutionary Tribunal, to stand trial for a conspiracy to put a tyrant at the head of affairs.¹

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxi. 329,
331. Deux
Amis, xii.
122, 125.

Hébert, Ronsin, Anacharsis Clootz, Momoro, Vincent, and fifteen others of their party, were all condemned. They evinced the native baseness of their dispositions by their cowardice in their last moments. The infamous Hébert wept from weakness; his agony was so conspicuous, that it attracted the eyes of all spectators from the sufferings of the other prisoners. The numerous captives in the prisons of Paris could hardly believe their eyes when they beheld the tyrants, who had sent so many to execution, and who were preparing a new massacre in the prisons, consigned, in their turn, to the scaffold. The populace, with their usual inconstancy, manifested joy at their punishment, and, in particular, loaded with maledictions the very Hébert for whose deliverance from the arrest of the Convention they had once put all Paris in insurrection. Such was the public avidity to see the execution of these leaders, lately so popular, that considerable sums were realised by the sale of seats on the fatal chariots, to witness their agonies, and on the tables and benches arranged round the scaffold.* Hébert, in particular, was the object of universal execration: his atheistical mummeries had alienated all the better class of citizens, and the numerous denunciations he had undergone from Robespierre and St Just had rendered him an object of detestation to the populace. He made no

93.
Their disgraceful
death.
March 26.

* "Hébert montra jusqu'au bout une extrême faiblesse. Pendant le trajet de la Conciergerie à l'échafaud, le spectacle de son agonie empêcha que l'on pût être attentif à la contenance de ses compagnons. La dernière nuit dans la prison il a eu des accès de désespoir." Ronsin said in prison to him, "Vous avez parlé aux Cordeliers, tandis qu'il fallait agir—on vous arrête en chemin; et vous deviez savoir que, *tôt ou tard, les instrumens des révolutions sont brisés.*" —*Rapport d'un détenu dans les prisons avec HÉBERT*; and *Histoire Parlementaire*, xxxi. 53, 55.

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attempt to conceal his terrors: he sank down at every step; and the vile populace, so recently his worshippers, followed the car, mimicking the cry of the persons who used to hawk his journal about the streets,—“Father Duchesne is in a devil of a rage.”* The victory of the Decemvirs was complete. They followed up the blow by disbanding the revolutionary force stationed at Paris, and diminishing the power of the committees of sections; all steps, and not unimportant ones, to the establishment of a regular government. The municipality of Paris, subdued by terror, was compelled to send a deputation to the Convention, returning thanks for the arrest and punishment of its own members. And the Committee of Public Salvation succeeded in destroying the very man of whose infamous journal they had shortly before been in the habit of distributing ten thousand copies daily at the public expense.¹†

¹ Deux
Amis, xii.
125, 126.
Th. vi. 162,
182. Lac.
ii. 144.
Mig. ii. 310.
Hist. Parl.
xxxi. 397,
399, and
xxxii. 53,
55.

94.
Rupture
between
Danton and
Robes-
pierre.

Danton and his partisans had not long the satisfaction of exulting over the destruction of the Anarchists. Robespierre and he had a meeting in the house of the former, but it led to no accommodation. Danton complained violently of the conduct of his former friend; Robespierre maintained a haughty reserve. “I know,” said Danton, “all the hatred which the Committee bear me, but I do

* “Il est b——t en colère le Père Duchesne”—alluding to his journal, *Lettres b——t patriotiques du véritable Père Duchesne*. In recounting such scenes, the spirit is lost if the very words are not used.

† In the proceedings against Hébert, some curious facts came out as to the means by which the infamous revolutionary press of Paris had been stimulated during the principal crises of the Revolution. The following entries appear:—

“Extrait des Registres de la Trésorerie Nationale.

2 Juin.—(Arrest of Girondists) Donné au			
Père Duchesne,	.	.	135,000 francs.
Mois d'Août,	.	.	10,000
4 Oct.	.	.	60,000”

In five months, . . . 205,000 or £8250.

See *Histoire Parlementaire*, xxxi. 232; *Vieux Cordelier*, No. V., and *Père Duchesne*, No. 330, 332.

“Le Comité du Salut Public faisait distribuer tous les jours dix mille exemplaires de ce journal. Ainsi le *Père Duchesne* n'était que l'organe des principes de ce comité.”—PRUDHOMME, v. 143.

not fear it.”—“You are wrong,” said Robespierre, “they have no bad intentions against you ; but it is well to be explicit. Not only do the Committee bear you no ill will, but they ardently desire to strengthen their government by the principal leaders of the Mountain. Should I be here if I desired your head ? would I offer my hand if I thought of assassinating you ? Our enemies are sowing jealousies betwixt us : take care, Danton ! In taking your friends for enemies, you may oblige them to become so. Let us see—can we not come to an understanding ? Is it, or is it not, necessary for power to be terrible, when it would coerce the wicked ?” “Yes,” said Danton ; “without doubt it is necessary to coerce the Royalists ; but we should not confound the innocent with the guilty.”—“And who has told you,” said Robespierre, “that one innocent person has perished ?” Danton, upon this, turning to the friend who accompanied him, said, with a bitter smile—“What say you ? Not one innocent has perished ?” They parted mutually exasperated. All intercourse between them immediately ceased. Robespierre, however, hesitated much before taking the decisive step of his arrest. “Ah !” said he, “that I had the lantern of the great philosopher, to read Danton’s heart, and know whether he really is a friend or enemy of the Republic.” The extreme Jacobins were less scrupulous ; they openly demanded Danton’s head, “to take away a false god from the multitude, and restore the worship of pure revolutionary virtue.” These feelings, however, were not general. Robespierre had sufficient evidence, during the days that immediately followed the execution of the Anarchists, that terror had reached its extreme point, and that a return to humanity was at length ardently desired by the people. Innumerable addresses were presented to the Convention, between the 26th and 30th March, congratulating them on the execution of the men who had disgraced the Revolution ;¹ the revolutionary army, of which Ronsin had been the chief, was disbanded amidst general

¹ Prudhom.
v. 146. Hist.
Parl. xxxii.
62. Mig. ii.
308. Th.
vi. 189.
Journ. de
la Mont.
No. 139, p.
1124. Lam.
Hist. des
Gir. viii. 2,
10.

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95.
Speech of
Collot
d'Herbois
at the Ja-
cobins.
March 29.

applause (30th March), and a discussion had even taken place at the Jacobins, as to recommending the removal of the busts of Chalier and Marat from their hall.

In truth, the Dantonists and friends of humanity, overjoyed at the punishment of Hébert and the extreme Anarchist leaders, gave full reins to their intoxication, and imprudently spread the report through Paris that the reign of blood was about to terminate. They even went so far as to suggest that a return should be at last made to more humane principles. Collot d'Herbois and the Jacobins sufficiently showed, however, that the Committee of Public Salvation had no intention of arresting the march of the Revolution. "The counter-revolutionists," said he, at their club, "announce by a thousand mouths, that the bust of Marat is about to be disgraced, and replaced by that of the monster who assassinated him. The aristocracy wish to profit by existing circumstances to attack the Revolution, by uniting the purest to the oppressors, and assimilating the traitors who have just been punished to the martyrs of liberty. They even go so far as to propose that the Jacobins should go into their projects, and make all the supporters of the Revolution tremble. Already they have proscribed Chalier; soon they will proscribe Marat too, and replace his bust by some other one, probably that of the tyrant. (*Loud cries of indignation.*) Open your eyes to the dangers which surround you, and you will see that measures very different from those proposed by the Moderates are now called for: government will act differently. They have caused the thunder to fall on the infamous men who have deceived the people; they have torn from them the masks which concealed their hideous outrages; *they will tear the mask from others*: let not the Moderates suppose that it is for them that we have held here our glorious sittings. I propose that whoever casts a doubt on the martyr Chalier should at once be declared a counter-revolutionist, and sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal."¹

¹ Journ. de
la Mont.
No. 139.
Séance,
29 Mars,
p. 1125.

Alarmed by these ominous words, the friends of Danton now conjured him to take steps to insure his own safety. "Danton," said Fabre d'Eglantine to him, "do you know of what you are accused? They say that you have only set in motion the car of the Revolution to enrich yourself, while Robespierre has remained poor in the midst of the treasures of the monarchy lying at his feet." "Well," replied Danton, "do you know what that proves? It proves that I love gold, and Robespierre loves blood. He is afraid of money, lest it should stain his hands." But, though aware of the danger, no resource remained to ward off the threatened blow. The club of the Cordeliers, indeed, was devoted to him, and the Convention in secret leaned to his side; but these bodies had no real power; the armed force was entirely in the hands of the Committee of Public Salvation. Having failed in rousing public opinion by means of the journals of his party, and the exertions of his friends in the Convention, what other expedients remained? "I would rather," said he, "be guillotined than become guillotiner: my life is not worth the trouble of preserving; I am weary of existence. Set off into exile! Do you suppose that one carries their country about with them on the sole of their shoe?" On the day before his arrest, he received notice that his imprisonment was under the consideration of the Committee, and he was again pressed to fly; but, after a moment's deliberation, he only answered, "They dare not!" In the night his house was surrounded, and he was arrested, along with Camille Desmoulins, Lacroix, Hérault de Séchelles, and Westermann. So little did Camille Desmoulins suspect the hand which had struck him, that he said to his wife when arrested, "I will fly to Robespierre: he was our guide, our friend, the confident of our first republican dreams. His hand united ours; he was our father; he cannot have turned our assassin." * Danton, on entering the prison, cordially

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96.
Arrest of
Danton.

* He had signed the marriage contract of Camille Desmoulins with Lucile,

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March 30.

welcomed the captives who flocked to behold him. "Gentlemen," said he, "I hoped to have been the means of delivering you all from this place; but here I am among you, and God only knows where this will end." He was immediately afterwards shut up in a solitary cell, the same which Hébert had recently before occupied. On entering it he exclaimed, "At last I perceive that in revolutions the supreme power finally rests with the most abandoned." * He soon after said to Lacroix, who accompanied him, and expressed his surprise that he had not endeavoured to save himself, "Their cowardice misled me: I was deceived by their baseness. When men commit follies, it is well to laugh at them." Soon after addressing Camille Desmoulins, who in despair, and weeping aloud, was dashing his head against the wall of the prison, he added, "What is the use of these tears? When sent to the scaffold, we should know how to ascend it cheerfully." During the short period that elapsed before his execution, his mind, in a distracted state, reverted to the innocence of his earlier years. "He spoke incessantly," said his fellow-captive, Riouffe, "of trees, flowers, and the country." Then, giving way to unavailing regret, he exclaimed—"It was just a year ago that I was the means of instituting the Revolutionary Tribunal: may God and man forgive me for what I did! I hoped in so doing to avert a second massacre in the prisons; it was not that it might become the scourge of humanity!"¹

¹ Deux Amis, xii. 126, 127. Mig. ii. 310, 312. Th. vi. 192. Riouffe, 67. Hist. Parl. xxxii. 212, 213. Lam. Hist. des Gir. viii. 19, 40, 41.

97. Violent agitation in the Convention. March 30.

His arrest produced a violent agitation in Paris. The Convention on the following morning was shaken by a general inquietude, which broke out in half-suppressed murmurs. "Citizens!" said Legendre, "four of the national representatives have been arrested during the

his young and charming wife. She wrote a long and touching letter to Robespierre on the occasion, but it never reached him.—LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, viii. 43.

* "Enfin je vois que dans les révolutions l'autorité toujours reste aux plus scélérats."—RIOUFFE, p. 67. A memorable sentiment, coming from such lips.

night : Danton is one, I am ignorant of the others. Danton is as innocent as myself, and yet he is in irons. His accusers, without doubt, are afraid that his answers would demolish the charges brought against him ; but you are bound to do justice ; and I demand that, before the report of the committee is received, he be examined in your presence." The proposition was favourably received by some, and loudly hooted by others. Tallien, the president, gave it his energetic support. "I will maintain," said he, "the liberty of speech ; let every one freely express his opinion. I remind his colleagues that we are here for the people, and concerned only with their interest. It is time to have done with individual disputes. Let the friends of the Revolution prove to-day their love for liberty. I will proclaim the decrees which have passed for the maintenance of liberty of speech." Loud applauses followed these words ; and from the agitation which prevailed, there is no doubt that if Danton had been brought before them, his powerful voice would have broken the talisman of the Decemvirs, and closed the reign of blood. But Robespierre immediately mounted the tribune.¹

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxii. 67.
Deux Amis,
xii. 127.

"From the trouble, for long unknown," said he, "which reigns in the Convention ; from the agitation produced by the words you have just heard ; it is evident that a great interest is at stake, and that the point now to be determined is, whether the safety of a few individuals is to prevail over that of the country. We shall see this day whether the Convention has courage to break a pretended idol, or to suffer it in its fall to overwhelm the Assembly and the people of France. Danton ! you shall answer to inflexible justice : let us examine your conduct. Accomplice in every criminal enterprise, you ever espoused the cause which was adverse to freedom : you intrigued with Mirabeau and Dumourier, with Hébert and Hérault de Séchelles ; you have made yourself the slave of tyranny. Mirabeau, who contemplated a change of

98.
Robes-
pierre's
speech sub-
duces them.

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dynasty, felt the value of your audacity, and secured it : you abandoned all your former principles, and nothing more was heard of you till the massacre in the Champ de Mars. At every crisis you have deserted the public interest ; you have ever attached yourself to the traitor party.” The terror inspired by these words restored silence in the Convention ; and at the same time, St Just, followed by the other members of the Committee of Public Salvation, entered the hall. With slow steps, a sombre and decided air, they approached the Tribune, when Robespierre again addressed Legendre. “Go on ; it is well that all the associates of the conspirators we have arrested should at once make themselves known. You have heard of the despotism of the Committees, as if the confidence which the people have reposed in you, and which you have transferred to the Committees, was not the surest guarantee for their patriotism. You affect to be afraid ; but I say, whoever trembles at this moment is guilty, for never did innocence fear the vigilance of the public authorities.” Unanimous applause from hands shaking with fright followed these words. None ventured to incur the terrible imputation—terror froze every heart ; and St Just, without opposition, ascended the Tribune.¹

He there made a detailed exposition of the grounds of accusation against the Moderate party, recounted their private irregularities, their unpardonable clemency ; charged them with being accomplices in every conspiracy, from that of the Royalists, whom they overthrew on the 10th August, to that of the Anarchists, whose treason had so recently been punished. “Citizens,” said St Just, “the Revolution is in the people, and not in the resources of a few individuals. There is something terrible in the love of country. It is so exclusive, that it sacrifices everything without pity, without remorse, to the public interest. It precipitated Manlius from the Tarpeian rock, it drew Regulus back to Carthage, and put Marat in the Pantheon. Your committee, impressed

¹ Hist. Parl. xxxii. 67, 68. Deux Amis, xii. 128, 129. Mig. ii. 312, 313. Lac. ii. 145. Th. vi. 194, 195. Hist. de la Conv. iii. 338.

99.
Speech of
St Just
against
Danton.

with these sentiments, have charged me to demand justice, in the name of the country, against men who have long betrayed it. May this example be the last you are called on to give of your inflexibility! Danton! you have become the accomplice of tyranny. You have conspired with Mirabeau and Dumourier, with Hébert, with Hérault de Séchelles. Danton! you have been the slave of tyranny. You have, it is true, opposed Lafayette; but Mirabeau, D'Orléans, Dumourier, did the same. Can you deny that you were sold to the three greatest enemies liberty ever had? You got from Mirabeau the direction of the department of Paris. At first you showed a menacing front to the court, but Mirabeau, who knew the value of your aid, bought you over. You were never heard of more in the Assembly, but you were found supporting the motion of Laclos, the minion of D'Orléans, in the Jacobins, which was the pretext made by the court for unfurling the red flag in the Champ de Mars, and massacring the patriots. You joined Brissot in drawing up the petition of the Champ de Mars, and escaped the fury of Lafayette, who butchered two thousand patriots. After Mirabeau's death, you conspired with Lameth and his party: you supported the Girondists in their suicidal efforts to plunge us into war. You became the associate of Guadet and Brissot: you spoke, on your return from Belgium, of the vices of Dumourier with as much admiration as the virtues of Cato. You held back from the revolution of 31st May, which overturned the Girondists. You have compared public opinion to a courtesan, who lavishes her favours on the most abandoned of mankind. These maxims were those of Catiline; they might well recommend you to the aristocracy. A bad citizen, you have conspired; a treacherous friend, you have betrayed. Justice demands the punishment of your double perfidy."¹ The utter absurdity of imputing to Danton and his friends such contradictory crimes, and supposing them in league with their bitterest enemies, was too glaring to escape

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¹ Hist. de la
Conv. iii.
338. Ri-
ouffe, 67.
Lac. ii. 145.
Thiers, vi.
198, 201.
Mig. ii. 313.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. viii.
30, 34.

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observation; but the Convention, mastered by fear, crouched beneath their tyrants, and *unanimously*, amidst loud applause, sent the accused to the Revolutionary Tribunal. The galleries imitated their example. From those benches, whence had issued so often bursts of applause at their speeches, were now heard only fierce demands for their heads.

100.
Their trial,
and prelimi-
nary pro-
ceedings.

When removed to the Conciergerie, preparatory to their trial, the astonishment of the captives was as great as when they entered the Luxembourg. "My late brethren," said Danton, "understand nothing of government: I leave everything in the most deplorable confusion. 'Twere better to be a poor fisherman than the ruler of men. My only comfort is, that my name is attached to some decrees which will show that I was not involved in all their fury." On their trial, which began on the 2d and continued to the 5th April, they evinced their wonted firmness, and addressed the judges in unusual terms of indignation. Danton, being interrogated by the president concerning his age and profession, replied—"My name is Danton, sufficiently known in the history of the Revolution; I am thirty-five; my abode will soon be in nonentity; and my name will live in the pantheon of history." Camille Desmoulins answered—"I am of the same age as the Sans-culotte Jesus Christ, when he died." Danton spoke with energy and resolution in his own defence. "My voice," said he, with that powerful organ which had been so often raised in the cause of the people, "will have no difficulty in refuting the calumnies contained in the act of accusation. Let the cowards who accuse me be brought forward; I will speedily cover them with confusion. Let the Committees appear; I require them both as accusers and judges. Let them appear: they will not. It matters little what judgment you pronounce; I have already told you my abode will soon be in nonentity. My life is a burden; I am weary of it, and will rejoice in the stroke

that sends me to the grave." The president rang his bell, but Danton's voice of thunder drowned the noise. "Do you not hear me?" said the president. "The voice of a man," replied Danton, "who defends his honour and his life, may well overcome your clamours. Individual audacity may well be coerced; but national audacity, of which I have so often given proofs, that is necessary: it is permitted in revolutions. When I see myself so grievously, so unjustly accused, I am no longer master of my indignation."¹

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¹ Bull. du
Trib. Rév.
Vol. iii. No.
21, p. 84.

"Is it for a revolutionist such as me, so strongly pronounced, so irrecoverably implicated, to defend myself against such charges as are now brought against me? Me sold to the court!—me the accomplice of Mirabeau, of D'Orléans, of Dumourier! Does not all the world know that I combated Mirabeau, thwarted all his plans, defeated all his attempts against liberty? You, St Just, shall answer to posterity for such declamations, directed against the best friend of the people—against the most ardent defender of liberty. In looking over this list of horror, I feel my very soul shudder." "Marat," interrupted the court, "was reduced to defend himself; but he did so without calumniating his accuser." "Have I not," resumed Danton, "done more in behalf of freedom than could be expected from any citizen? Did I not show myself, when they wished to withdraw the tyrant, by removing him to St Cloud? Have I not placarded, in the district of the Cordeliers, invitations to insurrection? Let my accusers appear, and I will plunge them into the obscurity from which they never should have been dragged. Vile impostors, appear! I will soon tear from you the mask which shields you from the public indignation. It is truly an astonishing thing the long blindness of the National Convention till this day on my conduct, and their sudden illumination!"²

^{101.}
Danton's
defence.² Bull. du
Trib. Rév.
Vol. iii. Nos.
24, 25, p. 92,
96. Hist.
Parl. xxxii.
144, 156.

After continuing in this manner for three days, during which his voice was sometimes so loud that it was heard

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102.Condemna-
tion of Dan-
ton and all
his party.
April 14.

across the Seine on the Quai de la Ferraille,* Robespierre deemed it high time to bring the prosecution to a conclusion. The method adopted was the same as that which had proved fatal to the Girondists—viz., the taking advantage of his influence in the Convention, which authorised the public accuser to obtain at the moment, a decree, authorising the Revolutionary Tribunal to declare *hors des débats*—in other words, to condemn, without further hearing—any accused party whom they deemed wanting in respect to the court. The austere indignation of Danton, the nerve of Desmoulins, the measured ability of Lacroix, rendered the judges apprehensive of a movement among the populace; to prevent which the Convention, without hesitation adopted the proposal. No sooner was this decree passed, than Amar hastened with it to the Tribunal, where Danton and his friends were prolonging their indignant defence.† “Here are the means,” said Amar, “for stifling these wretches.” Fouquier, Tinville, the public accuser, seized it with avidity, and read it to the court, demanding, at the same time, the instant condemnation of the accused. Danton rose and called the audience to witness that they had not been wanting in respect to the judges. “The time will come,” said he, “when the truth will be known: I foresee the greatest calamities to France: here is the dictator unveiled.” On the day following the debates were closed before they had begun their defence, notwithstanding the most energetic remonstrance from Camille Desmoulins, who called the audience to witness that they

* “Les fenêtres du tribunal étaient ouvertes, et Danton poussait par momens de tels éclats de voix qu’ils parvinrent au delà de la Seine jusqu’aux curieux qui encombraient le Quai de la Ferraille.”—(The trial was in the Palais de Justice.)—*Hist. Parl.* xxii. 164.

† “L’accusateur public a invité le greffier à faire lecture d’un décret tout récemment rendu par la Convention Nationale qui met *hors des débats* tout accusé qui ne saurait pas respecter le Tribunal.”—*Hist. Parl.* xxxii. 160. The decree itself was in these terms:—“La Convention Nationale décrète que tout prévenu de conspiration, qui résistera ou insultera à la justice nationale, sera mis hors des débats.”—*Décret*, 14 Avril 1794; *Hist. Parl.* xxxii. 187.

were murdered. On the ground that the jury were now sufficiently enlightened, and that the third day of the trial had commenced, the public accuser refused to allow the witnesses whom Lacroix proposed to call to be examined, on the ground that, being members of the Convention, they could not be at once witnesses and accusers. "We are about," said Danton and Lacroix, "to be judged without being heard in our defence: deliberation is at an end. Well! we have lived long enough to go to rest on the bosom of glory: let them lead us to the scaffold." The jury were enclosed, and soon after the president returned, and, with a savage joy, declared the verdict was guilty. The court instantly pronounced sentence after they were removed, which was read to them in their cells in the evening. "We are sacrificed," said Danton, "to the ambition of a few dastardly brigands; but they will not long enjoy their triumph: I drag Robespierre after me in my fall." Lucile, the youthful wife of Camille Desmoulins, earnestly besought Madame Danton, a young woman of eighteen, to throw herself at Robespierre's feet, and pray for the lives of both their husbands, but she refused. "I will willingly," said she, "follow Danton to the scaffold, but I will not degrade his memory before his rival. If he owed his life to Robespierre he would never pardon me, in this world or the next. He has bequeathed to me his honour—I will preserve it entire." Camille Desmoulins had less firmness. He tried to read "Young's Night Thoughts," but the book fell from his hands, and he could only articulate, "O my Lucile, O my Horace, what will become of you!"¹ *

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¹ Bull. du Trib. Rév. No. 26, p. 102. Mig. ii. 313. Lac. ii. 146. Th. vi. 203-212. Hist. Parl. xxxii. 161, 163. Lam. Hist. des Gir. viii. 42, 64, 66.

They went to the scaffold with the stoicism so usual at

* Hérault de Séchelles, on being conducted to his cell, after his condemnation, read for a while a volume of Rousseau, which he took from his pocket, and, closing it, said, "O mon maître! tu as souffert pour la vérité, et je vais mourir pour elle: tu as le génie, j'ai le martyre: tu es un plus grand homme, mais lequel est le plus philosophe de nous deux?"—LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, viii. 63.

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103.
Their execution.

that period. A numerous escort attended them, and an immense crowd was assembled, which beheld in silence their former leaders led out to execution. Camille Desmoulins exclaimed, when seated on the fatal chariot—"This, then, is the recompense awarded to the first apostle of liberty!" In moving towards the scaffold, he never ceased to address the people, hoping to interest them in his favour. "Generous people, unhappy people," he exclaimed, "they mislead you : save me ! I am Camille Desmoulins, the first apostle of freedom ! It was I who gave you the national cockade ; I called you to arms on the 14th July." It was all in vain ; the invectives of the mob redoubled as they passed under the windows of Robespierre, who grew pale at the noise. The indignation of Camille Desmoulins at this proof of their mutability was so excessive that he tore his shirt ; and though his hands were tied behind his back, his coat came off in venting his feelings on the people. At the Palais Royal he said—"It is here that, four years ago, I called the people to arms for the Revolution. Had Marat lived, he would have been beside us." Danton held his head erect, and cast a calm and intrepid look around him. "Do not disquiet yourself," said he, "with that vile mob."* At the foot of the scaffold he advanced to embrace Hérault de Séchelles, who held out his arms to receive him. The executioner interposed. "What !" said he, with a bitter smile, "are you more cruel than death itself ? Begone ! you cannot at least prevent our lips from soon meeting in that bloody basket." For a moment after, he was softened, and said—"O my beloved ! O my wife ! O my children ! shall I never see you more ?" But immediately checking himself, he exclaimed—"Danton, recollect

* "Longus deditorum ordo, septus armatis, per urbem incessit. Nemo supplicii vultu, sed tristes et truces adversum plausus ac lasciviam insultantis vulgi immobiles. Nihil quisquam locutus indignum, et quanquam inter adversa salva virtutis fama." How identical are the heroism of the brave and the baseness of the mob in every age ! The words of Tacitus, applied to the executions of Vitellius, might pass for a description of the last moments of Danton and Camille Desmoulins.—See TACITUS, *Hist.* iv. 2.

yourself ; no weakness!" Héroult de Séchelles ascended first, and died firmly. Camille Desmoulins regained his firmness in the last hour. His fingers, with convulsive grasp, held a lock of Lucile's hair, the last relic of this world which he took to the edge of the next. He approached the fatal spot, looked calmly at the axe, yet red with the blood of his friend, and said, "The monsters who assassinate me will not long survive my fall. Convey my hair to my mother-in-law." Danton ascended with a firm step, and said to the executioner,—“You will show my head to the people, after my death ; it is worth the pains.” These were his last words. The executioner obeyed the injunction after the axe had fallen, and carried the head around the scaffold. The people clapped their hands!¹

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¹Mig. ii. 134.
Lac. li. 146.
Th. vi. 216,
221. Hist.
de la Conv.
iii. 347.
Deux Amis,
xii. 134, 136.
Duval, iv.
299, 301.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. viii.
68, 69.

The wife of Camille Desmoulins, a young woman of twenty-three, to whom he was passionately attached, wandered round the prison of the Luxembourg, in which her husband was confined, night and day during his detention. The gardens where she now gave vent to her grief had been the scene of their first loves ; from his cell windows her husband could see the spot where they had met in the days of their happiness. Her distracted appearance, with some hints dropped in the jails by the prisoners, as to their hopes of being delivered by the aid of the people, during the excitement produced by the trial of Danton and his friends, led to a fresh prosecution for a “conspiracy in the prisons,” which was made the means of sweeping off twenty-five persons of wholly different principles and parties at one fell swoop. The apostate Bishop Gobel, Chaumette, the well-known and once formidable prosecutor of the municipality, the widow of Hébert, the widow of Camille Desmoulins, Arthur Dillon, a remnant of the Dantonists, and twenty others of inferior note, were indicted together for the crimes of having “conspired together against the liberty and security of the French people, endeavoured to trouble the state by

104.
Alleged
conspiracy
in the pri-
sons, and
numerous
executions
under it.

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civil war, to arm the citizens against each other, and against the lawful authority; in virtue of which they proposed, in the present month, to dissolve the national representation, assassinate its members, destroy the republican government, gain possession of the sovereignty of the people, and give a tyrant to the state." The absurdity of thus charging, as in one conspiracy, the leaders of two opposite factions, so recently at daggers-drawing with each other—Gobel and Chaumette, the partisans of anarchy and blood, with Dillon and the widow of Desmoulins, who had been exposing their lives to procure a return to humanity—produced no impression on the inexorable tribunal. They were all condemned, after a long trial, and the vital difference between them appeared in their last moments. The infamous Gobel wept from weakness; the atrocious Chaumette was almost lifeless from terror; but the widow of Desmoulins exhibited on the scaffold the heroism of Madame Roland and Charlotte Corday, and died rejoicing in the hope of rejoining her lost husband.¹ She did not appear with the undaunted

¹ Bull. du Trib. Rév. Hist. Parl. xxxii. 245. Lam. Hist. des Gir. viii. 40, 44, 77.

* The letters written by Camille Desmoulins during his imprisonment, and the night before his execution, to his wife, a young and elegant woman who had married him for love two years before, during the first fervour of the Revolution, are among the most interesting and pathetic monuments of the Revolution, opening as it were a glance into that awful amount of sorrow and wretchedness which that convulsion brought even upon its earliest and most ardent supporters. They are preserved in the *Histoire Parlementaire*, and the following extracts will convey some idea of their heart-rending affection:—*Ma chère Lucile, ma Vesta, mon ange, ma destinée ramène dans ma prison mes yeux sur ce jardin où je passai huit années de ma vie à te voir—un coin de vue sur le Luxembourg me rappelle une foule de souvenirs de nos amours. Je suis au secret, mais jamais je n'ai été par la pensée, par l'imagination, presque par le toucher, plus près de toi, de ta mère, de mon petit Horace. Ma justification est tout entière, dans mes huit volumes républicains. O ma bonne Lulotte! parlons d'autres choses. Je me jette à tes genoux; j'entends les bras pour t'embrasser—je ne trouve plus ma pauvre Lulotte! [Ici on remarque la trace d'une larme.] Envoie-moi le verre où il y a un C et un D—nos deux noms—un livre in-12 que j'ai acheté à Charpentier: ce livre roule sur l'immortalité de l'âme. J'ai besoin de me persuader qu'il y a un Dieu plus juste que les hommes, et que je ne puis manquer à te revoir. Adieu, Lucile! —adieu! Je ne puis pas t'embrasser; mais aux larmes que je verse, il me semble que je te tiens encore contre mon sein." [Ici se trouve la trace d'une seconde larme.]—*Seconde Lettre.*—"Je suis malade: je n'ai mangé que ta soupe depuis hier. Le Ciel a eu pitié de mon innocence; il m'a envoyé un*

air of those heroines, but she showed equal firmness. She died not for her country, but for her husband ; love, not patriotism, inspired her last moments. Her beauty, her innocence, the knowledge that she was the victim of her humanity, produced universal commiseration.

Thus perished the tardy but last defenders of humanity and moderation—the last who sought for peace, and advocated clemency toward those who had been vanquished in the Revolution. For long after their fall, no voice was heard against the Reign of Terror. Silent and unopposed, the tyrants struck redoubted blows from one end of France to the other. The Girondists had sought to prevent that fatal rule, the Dantonists to arrest it : both perished in the attempt. They perished because they were inferior in wickedness to their opponents ; they fell the victims of the little humanity which yet lingered in their bosoms. The combination of wicked men who thereafter governed France, is without a parallel in the

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105.
Silent pro-
scriptions of
the Reign of
Terror.

songe, où je vous ai vus tous ; envoie-moi tes cheveux et ton portrait—oh, je t'en prie ! car je pense uniquement à toi, et jamais à l'affaire qui m'amène ici !”
—*Dernière Lettre.*—“ Je te conjure, Lulotte, par nos éternelles amours, envoie-moi ton portrait ! Dans l'horreur de ma prison, ce sera pour moi une fête, un jour d'ivresse et de ravissement—celui où je reverrai ton portrait. En attendant envoie-moi de tes cheveux, que je puisse les mettre contre mon cœur. Ma chère Lucile ! me voilà revenu au temps de nos premières amours, où quelqu'un m'intéressait par cela seul qu'il sortait de chez toi. Hier, quand le citoyen qui t'a porté une lettre fut revenu, je me surprénais à le regarder comme s'il fût resté sur ces habits quelque chose de ta présence, quelque chose de toi. Hier j'ai découvert une fente dans mon appartement ; j'ai appliqué mon oreille—j'ai entendu la voix d'un malade qui souffrait. Il m'a demandé mon nom : je le lui ai dit. ‘O mon Dieu !’ s'écrie-t-il ; et j'ai reconnu distinctement la voix de Fabre d'Eglantine ! Si c'était Pitt ou Cobourg qui me traitassent si durement ! mais mes collègues, mais Robespierre, que m'a signé l'ordre de mon cachot ! mais la République, après tout ce que j'ai fait pour elle ! C'est le prix que je reçois de tout ce que j'ai fait pour elle ! J'avais rêvé une république que tout le monde eût adorée. Je n'ai pu croire que les hommes fussent si féroces et si injustes. Malgré mon supplice, je crois qu'il y a un Dieu. Je te reverrai un jour, O Lucile ! O Annette ! Sensible comme je l'étais, la mort qui me délivre de la vue de tant de crimes, est-elle un si grand malheur ? Adieu, Lucile ! Adieu, ma vie !—mon âme !—ma divinité sur la terre ! Je te laisse de bons amis, tout ce qu'il y a d'hommes vertueux et sensibles. Adieu, Lucile ! ma Lucile ! ma chère Lucile !—Adieu, Horace !—Adieu, Adèle !—Adieu, mon père ! Je sens fuir devant moi le rivage de la vie. Je vois encore Lucile ! Je te vois, ma bien-aimée—ma Lucile ! Mes mains liées t'embrassent, et ma tête séparée repose encore sur toi ses yeux mourans !” Here is the pathos of

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history of the world.* Their power, based on the organised weight of the multitude, and the ardent co-operation of the municipalities, everywhere installed by them in the possession of power, was irresistible. By them opulent cities were overturned; hundreds of thousands of deluded artisans reduced to beggary; agriculture, commerce, the arts destroyed; the foundations of every species of property shaken, and all the youth of the kingdom driven to the frontier, less to uphold the integrity of France, than to protect themselves from the just vengeance which awaited them from within and without. All bowed the neck before this gigantic assemblage of wickedness. The revolutionary excesses daily increased, in consequence of the union which the constant dread of retribution produced among their perpetrators. There was no medium between taking a part in these atrocities, and falling a victim to them. Virtue seemed powerless: energy appeared only in the extremity of resignation; religion in the heroism with which death was endured. There was not a hope left for France, had it not been for the dissensions which, as the natural result of their wickedness, sprang up among the authors of the public calamities.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, xii.
184, 192.
Hist. de la
Conv. iii.
230.

106.
General re-
flections on
the succes-
sive destruc-
tion of the
Revolution-
ists,

It is impossible not to be struck, in looking back on the fate of these different parties, with the singular and providential manner in which their crimes brought about their own punishment. No foreign interposition was necessary; no avenging angel was required to vindicate the justice of the Divine administration. They fell the

nature! When will romance or poetry figure anything so touching?—See *Hist. Parlementaire*.

* “Orrida maestà nel fero aspetto
Terrore accresce, e più superbo il rende;
Rosseggian gli occhi, e di veneno infetto,
Come infausta cometa il guardo splende.
Gl’involve il mento, e sull’irsuto petto
Ispida e folta la gran barba scende;
E in guisa di voragine profonda
S’apre la bocca d’atro sangue immonda.”

Gerusalemme Liberata, iv. 7.

victims of their own atrocity, of the passions which they themselves had let loose, of the injustice of which they had given the first example to others. The Constitutionalists overthrew the ancient monarchy, and raised a throne surrounded by Republican institutions ; but their imprudence in rousing popular ambition paved the way for the 10th August, and speedily brought themselves to the scaffold. The Girondists established their favourite dream of a Republic, and were the first victims of the fury which it excited : the Dantonists roused the populace against the Gironde, and soon fell under the axe which they had prepared for their rivals : the Anarchists defied the powers of Heaven itself ; but scarcely were their blasphemies uttered when they were swept off by the partners of their bloody triumphs. One only power remained, alone, terrible, irresistible. This was the power of DEATH, wielded by a faction steeled against every feeling of humanity, dead to every principle of justice. In their iron hands, order resumed its sway from the influence of terror ; obedience became universal from the extinction of hope. Silent and unresisted they led their victims to the scaffold, dreaded alike by the soldiers who crouched, the people who trembled, and the victims who suffered. The history of the world has no parallel to the horrors of that long night of suffering, because it has none to the guilt which preceded it ; tyranny never assumed so hideous a form, because licentiousness never required so severe a punishment.

“Die weltgeschichte ist das weltgericht.”*

* “The world’s history is the world judged.”—SCHILLER.

CHAPTER XV.

REIGN OF TERROR—FROM THE DEATH OF DANTON TO THE
FALL OF ROBESPIERRE.—APRIL 5—JULY 27, 1794.

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1794.
1.
Efforts of vice to conceal its own deformity.

“ALL bad actions,” says Sallust, “spring from good beginnings.”—“And the progress of these events,” says Machiavel, “is this, that in their efforts to avoid fear, men inspire it in others, and that injury which they seek to ward off themselves they throw upon their neighbours, so that it seems inevitable either to give or receive offence.”* “You are quite wrong,” said Napoleon to Talma, “in the representation of Nero; you should conceal the tyrant; *no man admits his wickedness either to others or himself*. You and I speak history, but we speak it like other men.”¹ The words which Sallust puts into the mouth of Cæsar, and Napoleon addressed to the actor of Nero, point to the same, and one of the most important principles of human nature. When vice appears in its native deformity, it is universally shunned—its features are horrible alike to others and itself.† It is by borrowing the language, and rousing the passions of virtue, that it insinuates itself into the minds, not only of the specta-

¹ Napoleon, ii. p. 274.

* “Omnia mala exempla,” says Sallust, “*bonis initiis orta sunt*.”—“E l'ordine di questi accidenti,” says Machiavel, “è che mentre che gli uomini cercano di non temere, cominciano a fare temere altrui, e quella injuria che gli scacciano di loro, la pongono sopra un altro, come se fusse necessario, offendere o esser offeso.”

† “Vice is a monster of such hideous mien,
That to be hated needs but to be seen;
But seen too oft, familiar with his face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”—POPE.

tors but of the actors ; the worst deeds are committed by men who delude themselves and others by the noblest expressions. Tyranny speaks with the voice of prudence, and points to the dangers of popular insurrection ; ambition strikes on the chords of patriotism and loyalty, and leads men to ruin others in the belief that they are saving themselves ; democratic fury appeals to the spirit of freedom, and massacres thousands in the name of insurgent humanity. In all these cases, men would shrink with horror from themselves if their conduct appeared in its true colours ; they become steeped in crime while yet professing the intentions of virtue, and before they are well aware that they have transgressed its bounds.

All these atrocities proceed from one source ; criminality in them all begins when one line is passed. This source is the principle of expedience ; this line is the line of justice. "To do evil that good may come of it," is perhaps the most prolific cause of wickedness. It is absolutely necessary, say the politicians of one age, to check the growing spirit of heresy ; discord in this world, damnation in the next, follow in its steps ; religion, the fountain of peace, is in danger of being polluted by its poison ; the transient suffering of a few individuals will insure the eternal salvation of millions. Such is the language of religious intolerance, such the principles which lighted the fires of Smithfield. How cruel soever it may appear, say the statesmen of another age, to sacrifice life for property, it is indispensable in an age of commercial industry ; the temptations to fraud are so great, the facilities of commission so extensive, that, but for the terror of death, property would be insecure, and industry, with all its blessings, nipped in the bud. Such is the language of commercial jealousy, and the origin of that sanguinary code which the humanity and extended wisdom of England has now perhaps too far relaxed. You would not hesitate, say the leaders of another period, to sacrifice a hundred thousand men in a single

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2.
Origin of the
atrocities of
the Reign of
Terror.

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campaign, to preserve a province, or conquer a frontier town ; but what are the wars of princes to the eternal contest between freedom and tyranny ? and what the destruction of its present enemies, to the liberty of unborn millions of the human race ? Such is the language of revolutionary cruelty ; such are the maxims which, beginning with the enthusiasm of philanthropists, ended in the rule of Robespierre. The unexampled atrocities of the Reign of Terror arose from the influence yielded to a single principle ; the greatest crimes which the world has ever known, were but an extension of the supposed expedience which hangs for forgery and burns for heresy.

3.
It springs
from sacri-
ficing jus-
tice to sup-
posed ex-
pedience.

The error in all these cases is the same, and consists in supposing that what is unjust ever can be ultimately expedient, or that the Author of Nature would have implanted feelings in the human heart which the interests of society require to be continually violated. “A little knowledge,” says Lord Bacon, “makes men irreligious, but extended wisdom brings them back to devotion.” With equal truth it may be said, that “a little experience makes governments and people iniquitous, but extended information brings them back to the principles of justice.” The real interests of society, it is at last perceived, can only be secured by those measures which command universal concurrence ; and none can finally do this but such as are founded on the virtuous feelings of our nature. It is by attending only to the *first effect* of unjust measures that men are ever deceived on this subject ; when their ultimate consequences come to be appreciated, the expedience is found all to lie on the other side. But these ultimate effects often do not appear for a considerable period, and hence the *immediate* danger of revolutions, and the extreme difficulty of arresting their course. The stoppage, however, is certain at last. When the feelings of the great body of mankind are outraged, or their interests menaced, by the measures of government, a reaction invariably, sooner or later, follows, and the temporary

advantages of injustice are more than counterbalanced by the permanent dissatisfaction which it occasions. The surest guide, it is at length discovered, is to be found in the inward monitor which nature has implanted in every human heart ; and statesmen are taught by experience, that true wisdom consists in following what their conscience tells them to be just, in preference to what their limited experience, or mistaken views, may apprehend to be expedient.

Novelists and writers of the drama would do well to reflect on these observations. They generally represent their depraved characters as *admitting their wickedness*, but expressing their determination to adhere to it. This never occurs in real life. Men often admit the performance of, or profess an intention to perform, actions which the world calls wicked : but *they never admit they are wicked*. Invariably they speak of them as perfectly justifiable, or a commendable escape from absurd or iniquitous restraint. The libertine will avow all his deeds of perfidy, nay, he will glory in them ; but he never allows they are wrong : on the contrary, he maintains they were no more than obedience to the dictates of nature, and that hypocritical cant alone can make them the subject of condemnation. The fraudulent bankrupt may not deny his deeds of deceit ; but as long as he perseveres in his career, he represents them only as clever devices, indicating a superiority in the conduct of affairs over other men. The thief often admits his depredations, nay, he magnifies their number and dexterity ; but while he remains a thief he never drops a hint as to their being criminal. The tyrant may, in a soliloquy, confess his cruel projects ; but he never confesses they are cruel. State necessity, overruling destiny, are ever in his mouth ; he is only watching over the safety of the commonwealth ; he is anticipating or warding off the strokes of the traitor. Milton represents Satan justifying his temptation of our First Parents even amidst the innocence of Paradise.

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XV.
1794.

4.
Great error
of drama-
tists and
novelists in
this respect.

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XV.

“Necessity, the tyrant’s plea,” was already in his mouth.*

1794.
5.
Examples
of this.

The works of many of the greatest dramatists and romance-writers of modern times are characterised by this remarkable error—Racine and Molière, Alfieri and Scott, Lope de Vega and Bulwer, with all their profound knowledge of the human heart, have fallen into it.† Yet deeper observers of human nature have perceived the real character of man in this respect. Shakespeare draws, with a master’s hand, the self-delusion of the human heart, and the *struggle* in the breast of the incipient criminal. Corneille represents his heroes justifying all their excesses on the grounds of state necessity; it was on this account that Napoleon said, if he had lived in his time, he would have made him his first councillor of state. Euripides and Sophocles exhibit the cruel deeds of their characters as overborne by irresistible destiny. Machiavel holds forth state policy as justifying deeds of wickedness to such an extent, that subsequent ages have been doubtful whether he did not intend to vindicate them altogether. It is no doubt very convenient for a dramatist to represent his atrocious characters as laying bare their atrocity in conversation with confidants and in soliloquies; but no man ever met with this in real life. Those who look for it in the world will be constantly disappointed. Among the innumerable criminals whom the French Revolution warmed into life, there is not one who ever

* “And should I at your harmless innocence
Melt as I do, yet public reason just,
Honour and empire with revenge enlarged,
By conquering this new world, compels me now
To do what else, though damned, I should abhor.
So spake the fiend, and *with necessity*,
The tyrant’s plea, excused his devilish deeds.

Paradise Lost, iv. 389.

† It is in an especial manner conspicuous in Alfieri. Madame de Stael was of the same opinion: “Il y a dans les pièces d’Alfieri une telle profusion d’énergie et de magnanimité, ou bien une telle exagération de violence et de crime, qu’il est impossible de reconnaître le véritable caractère des hommes. Ils ne sont jamais ni si méchants ni si généreux qu’il les peint.”—*Corinne*, lib. vii. c. 2.

approached even to an admission that he had done wrong in the course of it. The same plea was Cromwell's apology for the murder of Charles I.* He knew the human heart well who said—"The heart is *deceitful above all things*, and desperately wicked."

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The truth of these principles was strongly exemplified in the later stages of the French Revolution. During the four months which elapsed between the death of Danton and the fall of Robespierre, DEATH became the sole engine of government; systematic and daily executions took place in the capital; extermination, conducted by despotic agents, prevailed in the provinces—and yet nothing but the language of philanthropy was breathed in the Convention, nothing but the noblest sentiments were uttered by the Decemvirs. Each defeat of their rivals only rendered the ruling faction more sanguinary. The successive proscriptions of the Royalists, the Girondists, the Constitutionals, the Anarchists, and the Moderates, were immediately followed by a more violent effusion of human blood, and a more vehement profession of the principles of humanity. The destinies of France, as of every other country which undergoes the crisis of a revolution, had fallen into the hands of men, who, born of the public convulsions, were sustained by them alone: they massacred in the name of their principles, they put to death in the name of the public welfare: but terror of their rivals was the real spring of their actions. The most barbarous cruelty, the most ruthless violence, the most degrading despotism, were represented as emanating from the principles of freedom, and as imperiously called for by state necessity.¹ The noblest and most sacred motives which can influence the human breast—virtue, humanity, love for the public good, the freedom of the world—were incessantly invoked

6.
Principles
of Robes-
pierre's
government
after the fall
of Danton.

¹ Deux
Amis, xii.
178, 192.
Mig. ii. 316.
Th. vi. 223.

* On the evening after the execution of that monarch, he walked round the corpse in Whitehall, muffled up in a long black cloak, repeating to himself the words, "Dreadful necessity!"—See *Europ. Mag.* xx. 106; and *Anecdotes of Distinguished Persons*, i. 254.

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7.

Universal
submission
followed the
death of
Danton.

to justify their executions, to vindicate their tyranny, to prolong a power founded on the agony of the people.

Yet, so firmly was their power established, that the death of Danton was followed by immediate and unqualified submission from every part of France. Legendre himself, his old friend, said at the Jacobin Club—"I am bound to declare before the people, that I am fully convinced, by the documents I have inspected, of Danton's guilt. Before his accusation I was his intimate friend; I would have answered for his patriotism with my head; but his conduct, and that of his accomplices, at their trial, leaves no doubt of their intentions." Robespierre made a laboured harangue, interrupted at every moment by applause, against his unfortunate rival. "It is evident," said Arthur, one of his own party, "that Danton was led to engage Dumourier to march to Paris. The money which Danton possessed was offered to Santerre, but not quickly enough to produce an insurrection."* The same sentiments were re-echoed from every part of France. From all the departments arrived a crowd of addresses, congratulating the Committee of Public Salvation and the Convention on their energy. Every one hastened to make his submission to the government, and to admit the justice of its proceedings. But while approbation was in every mouth, submission in every countenance, terror in every heart, hatred at the oppressors was secretly spreading, and the downfall of democratic tyranny preparing amidst the acclamations of its triumph.¹

¹ Journal de la Mont. No. 145, 1173. Th. vi. 223, 225.

* It clearly appears that Danton had at one period received large sums of money from the court. In addition to the evidence on this subject furnished by Bertrand de Molleville, already referred to (*ante*, chap. vii. § 24), it appears from a note of Lafayette's that he had previously agreed to sell himself to the court. "Danton s'était vendu à condition qu'on lui achèterait pour 100,000 livres (£4000), sa charge d'avocat au conseil, dont le remboursement d'après la suppression n'était que de 10,000 livres. Quant à Danton il était prêt à se vendre à tous les partis. Lorsqu'il faisait des motions incendiaires aux Jacobins, il était leur espion auprès de la Cour, à laquelle il rendait compte régulièrement de ce qui s'y passait. Plus tard il reçut beaucoup d'argent: le Vendredi avant le 10 Août, on lui donna 100,000 écus. Madame Elizabeth disait avant cette journée—'Nous sommes tranquilles; nous pouvons compter sur

The political fanaticism of that extraordinary period exceeded the religious fervour of the age of Cromwell. Posterity will find it as difficult to credit the one as the other. "Plus le corps social transpire," said Collot d'Herbois, "plus il devient sain."—"Il n'y a que les morts qui ne reviennent pas," exclaimed Barère. "Le vaisseau de la Révolution ne peut arriver au port que sur une mer rougie de flots de sang," said St Just. "Une nation ne se régénère que sur des monceaux de cadavres," rejoined Robespierre.* Such were the principles daily carried into practice for months together in every town in France. Alone and unrestrained, the Committee of Public Salvation struck repeated and resistless blows from one end of the kingdom to the other. Fertile in crime, abounding in wretchedness, that eventful reign was not wanting in the most heroic examples of virtue. "Non tamen adeo virtutum sterile seculum, ut non et bona exempla prodiderit. Comitatae profugos liberos matres, secutæ maritos in exilia conjuges, propinqui audentes, constantes generi, contumax etiam adversus tormenta servorum fides, supremæ clarorum virorum necessitates, ipsa necessitas fortiter tolerata, et laudatis antiquorum mortibus pares exitus."†

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8.

Political
fanaticism of
the period.

¹Mig.ii.317.
Riouffe,
181-186.
Rév. Mém.
xlii. 186.
Tac. Hist.
i. 2.

The professed object of the Decemvirs was to establish Danton.'—*Note trouvée dans les papiers du Général Lafayette; Hist. Parl.* xxxii. 105, 106.

* "Si l'on veut sauver le vaisseau de la République, *point de pitié; du sang! du sang!* Que tous les Capétiens ou autres dénominations Royales périssent. Ni César ni Pompée! voilà ma profession de foi."—ACHARD à GRAVIER, *juré national*, 10 *Ther. Ann.* 2; *Papiers trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 225. These expressions, to which hundreds of others might be added, prove how true to nature the great Scottish novelist was in his delineation of the Covenanters. "We must smite them hip and thigh, even from the rising to the going down of the sun. It is our commission to slay them like Amalek, and utterly destroy all they have, and spare neither man nor woman, infant nor suckling; therefore hinder me not," said Burley, "for this must not be done negligently."—*Old Mortality*, chap. ix.

† "Yet the age was not so sterile in virtue as to be destitute of great examples. Mothers attended their flying children, wives followed their exiled husbands, relations were undaunted, sons-in-law unshaken, the fidelity of slaves firm even against the utmost tortures, the illustrious subjected to the utmost hardships, and that hardship itself bravely endured, and death, equal to the most renowned of antiquity, of daily occurrence."

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9.

Professed
object of the
Decemvirs.

a republic in France after the model of the ancients, to change the manners, the habits, the public spirit of the country. Sovereignty in the people, magistrates without pride, citizens without vice, simplicity of manners, fraternity of relations, austerity of character; such was the basis on which their institutions were to rest. There was one objection to them, that they were utterly impracticable, from the character of the great body of mankind. Camille Desmoulins saw this, when in a letter to his wife, the night before his execution, he said—"I had dreamt of a republic which all the world would have adored. I could not have believed that men were so ferocious and so unjust as I have found them to be." "I knew well the great," said Alfieri, after witnessing at Paris the 10th August, "*but I did not know the little.*"* Such were the errors which ruined France—a mistaken idea of the virtue of unsophisticated man, unbounded confidence in social regeneration, utopian expectations of human perfectibility were the root of all the errors which prevailed. To accomplish these chimerical projects, it was indispensable to destroy the whole superior classes of society, to cut off all those who were pre-eminent among their neighbours, either for fortune, rank, talent, or acquirement. These, they seriously believed, were the only wicked men in the world. To destroy them was the end, accordingly, proposed in the indiscriminate massacres which were put in execution. And what would have been its consequence if completely carried into effect? To sink the whole human race to the level of the lowest classes, to annihilate all superiority in virtue, knowledge, or acquirement, and destroy everything which dignifies or adorns human nature. Such was the chimera which they followed through these oceans of blood. Politicians have no right, after such proceedings, to reproach religious enthusiasm with the reign of saints, or the expected approach of the millennium.¹

¹ See Rap. de St Just, April 13, 303, 353. Robespierre, May 7. Hist. Parl. xxxii. p. 353.

* "Je connais bien les grands, mais je ne connaissais pas les petits."—ALFIERI, *Vita*, i. 374 *ad fin.*

In pursuance of these views, St Just made a laboured report on the general police of the commonwealth, in which he recapitulated all the fabulous stories of conspiracies against the Republic ; explaining them as efforts of every species of vice against the austere rule of the people ; and concluding with holding out the necessity of the government striking without intermission, till it had cut off all those whose corruption opposed itself to the establishment of virtue. “ You have been severe ; you were right to be so, but you have acted judiciously. It was necessary to resist crime by inflexible justice, to destroy conspiracies, and to punish the sanguinary hypocrisy of those who, without courage, seek to restore the throne and destroy the Republic. The foundation of all great states has been laid in storms. The basis of all great institutions is terror. Where would now have been an indulgent Republic ? We have opposed the sword to the sword, and its power is in consequence established. It has emerged from the storm, and its origin is like that of the earth out of the confusion of chaos, and of man who weeps in the hour of nativity.” As a consequence of these principles, he proposed a general measure of proscription against all the nobles as the irreconcilable opponents of the Revolution. “ You will never,” said he, “ satisfy the enemies of the people, till you have re-established tyranny in all its horrors. They can never be at peace with you ; you do not speak the same language ; you will never understand each other. Banish them by an inexorable law ; the universe may receive them ; and the public safety is our justification.” He then proposed a decree which banished all the ex-nobles, all strangers from Paris, the fortified towns, and seaports of France ; and declared *hors la loi* whoever did not yield obedience in ten hours to the order. It was received with applause by the Convention, and passed, like all the decrees of government at that time, without coming to a vote.¹

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10.

St Just's
report on
the state
of the Re-
public.

April 13.

¹ Hist. Parl.

xxxii. 311,

312, 324.

Th. vi. 228,

230. Hist.

de la Conv.

iv. 36, 39.

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11.
Closing of
all clubs
in France
except the
Jacobins.
April 24.

The Committee of Public Salvation, now confident in its own strength, and strong in the universal submission of France, adopted several measures calculated to strengthen its own power, and subvert that of the people. The situations of the different ministers of state were abolished, and twelve committees appointed to carry on the details of government. These commissions, entirely appointed by the Committee of Public Salvation, and dependent on the will of its members, were, in fact, nothing but the offices in which they exercised their mighty and despotic powers. Shortly after, steps were taken to extinguish all the popular societies which did not immediately depend on the great parent club of the Jacobins. It was resolved at that society that they would no longer receive any deputation from bodies formed since the 10th August, or keep up any correspondence with them ; and that a committee should be appointed to consider whether it should be maintained with those which were formed before that event. This measure, directed in an especial manner against the club of the Cordeliers, the centre of the influence of Danton, soon produced the desired effect. Intimidated by the destruction of the leaders of that great society, the whole other clubs in France, to avoid the coming storm, dissolved themselves ; and in less than ten days after the promulgation of this resolution, there remained no secondary club in France, but those which were affiliated with the Jacobins at Paris. That body thenceforward became the sole organ of government in regulating public opinion. It was next proposed to close the sittings of the Cordeliers ; but this was unnecessary ; that club, once so terrible, rapidly declined, and soon died a natural death. The Jacobins, swayed with absolute power by the Committee of Public Salvation, with its affiliated societies, alone remained of all the innumerable clubs which had sprung up in France.¹ Thus, on all sides, the anarchy of the Revolution was

¹ Decree,
April 24, 27.
1793. Hist.
Parl. xxxvi.
352, 353.

destroying itself ; and out of its ruins the stern and relentless despotism of a few political fanatics was wringing out of the heart's blood of France the last remnants of democratic fervour.

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Robespierre was the leader of this sect of fanatics ; but he was associated in the Committee with zealots more unpitiable or less disinterested than himself. These were St Just and Couthon. The former exhibited the true features of gloomy fanaticism. A regular visage, dark and lank hair, a penetrating and severe look, a melancholy expression of countenance, revived the image of those desperate Scottish enthusiasts of whom modern genius has drawn so graphic a picture. Simple and unostentatious in his habits, austere in private, and indefatigable in public, he was, at twenty-five, the most resolute, because the most sincere of the Decemvirs. A warm admirer of the Republic, he was ever at his post in the committees, and never wanting in resolution during his missions to the armies ; enthusiastic in his passion for the multitude, he disdained to imitate its vices or pander to its desires, as Hébert did. Steeled against every sentiment of pity, he demanded the execution of victims in the same manner as the supply of the armies. Proscriptions, like victories, were essential to the furtherance of his principles.* He early attached himself to Robespierre, from the similarity of their ideas, and the reputation of incorruptibility which he enjoyed ; their alliance gave raise to a portentous combination of visionary ideas and domineering passion, with inflexible and systematic severity.

12.
Character of
St Just.

Couthon was the creature of Robespierre. A mild and beautiful countenance, a figure half-paralysed, con-

* "On fait trop de lois ; trop peu d'exemples : vous ne punissez que les crimes saillans ; les crimes hypocrites sont impunis. *Faites punir un abus léger dans chaque partie : c'est le moyen d'effrayer les méchans, et de leur faire voir que le gouvernement a l'œil partout. Appelle, mon ami, l'attention de la société sur les maximes fortes du bien public ; qu'elle s'occupe des grands moyens de gouverner un état libre.*"—ST JUST à ROBESPIERRE ; *Papiers trouvés chez Robespierre*, ii. 260.

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13.

Of Couthon,
and parties
in the com-
mittees of
government.

cealed a soul animated with the most unpitiable fanaticism. His voice was soft and melodious ; it was like the low ringing of a silver bell. These three men formed a triumvirate, which soon acquired the management of the Committee, and awakened an animosity on the part of the other members which ultimately led to their ruin. What rendered their proceedings especially dangerous was the extraordinary ability and energy with which they were conducted, and the eloquent language and generous sentiments which they put forth on all occasions to justify their tyrannical actions. The Triumvirate, however, though very powerful, were far from being omnipotent in the Committee of Public Salvation, and with the Committee of General Safety they were often on terms verging on open hostility. In the former and more important Committee, Barère, Billaud Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, formed a second party, often at variance with Robespierre ; Carnot, Prieur, and Lindet, generally kept aloof from both. Robespierre's party in the Committee of Public Salvation was termed the "Men with a high hand ;" Billaud Varennes' was called the "Revolutionary party ;" Carnot's, "the Examiners." But though these divisions existed, and in the end produced important effects, they did not appear in any public act. To appearance the Committees were perfectly united ; they wielded apparently by one will the whole powers of government. If the Convention was to be intimidated, St Just was employed ; if surprised, Couthon was intrusted ; if any opposition was manifested, Robespierre was sent for, and his terrible voice soon stifled the expression of discontent.¹

¹Hist. Parl.
xxxiii. 8, 9.
Mig. ii. 319,
320.

14.
Their pro-
digious
energy.

To accomplish their regeneration of the social body, the Triumvirate proceeded with gigantic energy, and displayed consummate ability. For two months after the fall of Danton, they laboured incessantly to confirm their power. Their commissioners spread terror through the departments, and communicated the requisite impulse to the affiliated Jacobin clubs, which alone now remained in

existence. These clubs secured the elections of all the magistrates and public functionaries in their interest. The utmost pains were taken to render all the authorities of government energetic in spreading terror in every direction, by sternly shutting out the feelings of mercy.* The national guard was universally devoted to their will, and proved the ready instrument of the most sanguinary measures. The armies, victorious on every side, warmly supported their energetic administration, and made the frontiers resound with the praise of the government. Strong in the support of such powerful bodies, the fanatical leaders of the Revolution boldly and universally began the work of extermination. The mandates of death issued from the capital, and a thousand guillotines were instantly raised throughout the towns and villages of France. Amidst the roar of cannon, the rolling of drums, and the sound of the tocsin, the suspected were everywhere arrested, while the young and active were marched off to the defence of the country. Fifteen hundred bastilles, spread through the departments, soon groaned with the multitude of captives ; and these being insufficient to contain their numbers, the monasteries, the palaces, the chateaus, were generally employed as temporary places of confinement. The abodes of festivity, the palaces of kings, the temples of religion, were filled with victims ; fast as the guillotine did its work, it could not reap the harvest of death which everywhere presented itself ;¹ and the crowded state of the prisons soon

¹ Pr. Hist.
Lac. ii. 149.
Mig. ii. 320.
Chateaub.
Essai Hist.
Œuv. i. 61,
63.

* " Les tribunaux doivent aller au fait, et frapper sans pitié tous les conspirateurs ; ils doivent être aussi des tribunaux politiques ; ils doivent se rappeler que tous les hommes qui n'ont pas été pour la Révolution, ont été pour cela même contre elle, puisqu'ils n'ont rien fait pour la patrie. Dans une place de ce genre, la sensibilité individuelle doit cesser, elle doit prendre un caractère plus grand, plus auguste, elle doit s'étendre à la République. Tout homme qui échappe à la justice nationale est un scélérat qui fera un jour périr des républicains que vous devez sauver. Tu as une grande mission à remplir : oublie que la nature te fit homme et sensible. Dans les commissions populaires l'humanité individuelle, *l'humanité qui prend le voile de la justice, est un crime.*"—PAYAN, *juré révol. de Paris. Papiers trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 370.

CHAP. XV. produced contagious fevers, which swept off thousands of their unhappy inmates.

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15.
Purifications of the Jacobin Club.

To support these violent measures, the utmost care was taken to preserve in full vigour the democratic spirit in the Club of the Jacobins, the centre of the revolutionary action throughout France. By successive *purifications*, as they were called, all those who retained any sentiments of humanity, any tendency towards moderation, were expelled, and none left but men of iron, steeled against every approach to mercy. The Club in this way at length became the complete quintessence of cruelty, and the focus of the most fearful revolutionary energy. It was its extraordinary energy and extensive influence, and the absolute direction it had obtained over all the affiliated clubs and departments, which constituted the real secret of Robespierre's power. Never had Turkish sultan so faithful a body of janizaries attached to his cause ; never Romish pontiff so energetic a spiritual militia under his orders. It was the magnitude of their crimes against all classes, the certainty of punishment if he were overturned by any, which was the secret of their fidelity. The influence of this Club daily augmented in the latter stages of the Reign of Terror.

¹ Deux Amis, xii.
Toul. iv. 360. Chateaub. Œuv. i. 61. Mig. ii. 320.

As he approached the close of his career, Robespierre, suspicious of the Convention and the Mountain, rested almost entirely on that chosen band of adherents, whose emissaries ruled with absolute sway the municipality and the departments.¹

16.
Great accumulation of captives at Paris, and throughout France.

Eight thousand prisoners were soon accumulated in the different places of confinement in Paris ; the number throughout France exceeded two hundred thousand. The condition of such a multitude of captives was necessarily miserable in the extreme ; the prisons of the Conciergerie, of the Force, and the Mairie, were more horrible than any in Europe. All the comforts which, during the first months of the Reign of Terror, were allowed to the captives of fortune, had of late been with-

drawn. Such luxuries, it was said, were an unsupportable indulgence to the rich aristocrats, while, without the prison walls, the poor were starving for want. In consequence they established refectories, where the whole prisoners, of whatever rank or sex, were allowed only the coarsest and most unwholesome fare. None were permitted to purchase better provisions for themselves ; and, to prevent the possibility of their doing so, a rigorous search was made for money of every description, which was all taken from the captives. Some were even denied the sad consolation of bearing their misfortunes together ; and to the terrors of solitary confinement were added those of death, which daily became more urgent and inevitable. The prodigious numbers who were thrust into the prisons, far exceeding all possible accommodation, produced the most frightful filth in some places, the most insupportable crowding in all ; and, as the ineffable result of these, joined to the scanty fare and deep depression of these gloomy abodes, contagion made rapid progress, and mercifully relieved many from their sufferings. But this only aggravated the sufferings of the survivors ; the bodies were overlooked or forgotten, and often not removed for days together. Not content with the real terrors which they presented, the ingenuity of the jailers was exerted to produce imaginary anxiety ; the long nights were frequently interrupted by visits from the executioners, solely intended to excite alarm ; the few hours of sleep allowed to the victims were broken by the rattling of chains and unbarring of doors, to induce the belief that their fellow-prisoners were about to be led to the scaffold ; and the warrants for death against eighty persons in one place of confinement, were made the means of keeping six hundred in agony.¹

Despair of life, recklessness of the future, produced their usual effects on the unhappy crowd of captives. Some sank into sullen indifference ; others indulged in immoderate gaiety, and sought to amuse life even at the

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¹ Tableau des Prisons de Paris pendant la Terreur, i. 7, 11. Th. vi. 18, 149, 150, 319. Riouffe, 83. Lac. ii. 149. Toul. iv. 358, 360.

17. Extraordinary feelings of the prisoners.

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foot of the scaffold. The greater part walked about unable to bear the torture of thought when sitting still ; few remained at rest.

“ Supin giaceva in terra alcuna gente ;
Alduna si sedea tutta raccolta,
Ed altra andava continuamente.
Quella che giva intorno era più molta ;
E quella men che giaceva al tormento ;
Ma più al duolo avea la lingua sciolta.” *

The day before his execution, the poet Ducorneau composed a beautiful ode, which was sung in chorus by the whole prisoners, and repeated, with a slight variation, after his execution.† At other times the scene changed ; in the midst of their ravings the prisoners first destined for the scaffold were transported by the Phedon of Plato and the death of Socrates ; infidelity in its last moments betook itself with delight to the sublime belief of the immortality of the soul. The prisoners whose hearts were overflowing with domestic sorrow were in a peculiar manner open to the generous emotions ; friendships were formed in a few hours ; common dangers excited a universal and mutual sympathy ; even the passion of love was often felt on the verge of the tomb. The universal uncertainty of life, combined with the multitude exposed to similar chances, induced both a warm sympathy in hearts which in other circumstances might have remained strangers to it, and a strange indifference to individual fate.¹ Religion penetrated those gloomy

¹ Riouffe, 108, 111.
Th. vi. 320.
Tableau des Prisons, i. 27, 47, 57.
Lam. Hist. des Gir. viii. 132.

* “ On the earth some lay supine,
Some crouching close were seated, others paced
Incessantly around ; the latter tribe
More numerous ; those fewer who beneath
The torment lay, but louder in their grief.”

DANTE, *Inferno*, xiv. 22.

† In the transport of the moment another exclaimed in extempore verse—

“ Amis ! combien il a d'attraits
L'instant où s'unissent nos âmes !
Le cœur juste est toujours en paix ;
O doux plaisir que n'eut jamais
L'ambitieux avec ses trames !
Venez, bourreaux ! nous sommes prêts.”

abodes, and often lent its never-failing support to suffering humanity : and nothing astonished the few who escaped from confinement so much as the want of sympathy for the sufferings of mankind which generally prevailed in the world.

From the furthest extremities of France crowds of prisoners daily arrived at the gates of the Conciergerie, which successively sent forth its bands of victims to the scaffold. Grey hairs and youthful forms ; countenances blooming with health, and faces worn with suffering ; beauty and talent, rank and virtue, were indiscriminately rolled together to the fatal doors. With truth might have been written over the portals what Dante placed over the entrance of his *Inferno*.

“ Per me si va nella città dolente ;
Per me si va nell’ eterno dolore ;
Per me si va tra la perduta gente.

Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch’ entrate.” *

Sixty persons often arrived in a day, and as many were on the following morning sent out to execution. Night and day the cars incessantly discharged victims into the prisons : weeping mothers and trembling orphans, grey-haired sires and youthful innocents, were thrust in without mercy with the brave and the powerful : the young, the beautiful, the unfortunate, seemed in a peculiar manner the prey of the assassins. Nor were the means of emptying the prisons augmented in a less fearful progression. Fifteen only were at first placed on the chariot, but the number was soon augmented to thirty, and gradually rose to seventy or eighty persons, who daily were sent forth to the place of execution ;¹ when the fall of Robespierre put a stop to the murders, arrangements had been made for

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8.
Picture of
the prisons
during this
period.

¹ Tableau
des Prisons
de Paris
pendant la
Terreur, ii.
79, 88.
Riouffe, 83,
84. Th. vi.
319.

* “ Through me you pass into the city of woe ;
Through me you pass into eternal pain ;
Through me among the people lost for aye ;
All hope abandon, ye who enter here.”

DANTE, *Inferno*, iii. 1.

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increasing the daily number to one hundred and fifty.* An immense aqueduct, to remove the gore, had been dug from the Seine as far as the Place St Antoine, where latterly the executions took place ; and four men were daily employed in emptying the blood of the victims into that reservoir.†

19.
Indecent
searching of
the female
prisoners.

The female prisoners, on entering the jails, and frequently during the course of their detention, were subjected to indignities so shocking that they were often worse than death itself. Under the pretence of searching for concealed articles, money, or jewels, they were obliged to undress in presence of their brutal jailers, who, if they were young or handsome, subjected them to searches of the most rigorous and revolting description.‡ This process was so common that it acquired a name, and was called “Rapiotage.” Many monsters made their fortunes by this infamous robbery. A bed of straw alone awaited the prisoners when they arrived in their wretched cells : the heat was such, from the multitudes thrust into them, that they were

* “Ils avaient tout disposé pour en envoyer cent-cinquante à la fois à la place du supplice. Dejà un aqueduc immense, qui devait voiturier du sang, avait été creusé à la place St Antoine. Tous les jours le sang humain se puisait par seaux, et quatre hommes étaient occupés au moment de l'exécution à les vider dans cet aqueduc.”—RIOUFFE, *sur les Prisons*, 84 ; *Rév. Mémoires*, xxiii. 84.

† “Α, ποι ποτ' ἤγαγες με ; προς ποίαν στεγην ;

Προς την Ατρείδων· εἰ συ μὴ τοδ' ἐννοεῖς—

Μισοθεον μὲν οὖν, πολλὰ συνιστορά

Αὐτοφονα κακὰ τε κ' ἀρ ταναί

Ἄνδρος σφαγίων καὶ πέδον ραντηρίων.”

ÆSCHYLUS, *Agam.* 1050.

“Whither do you lead me ? To what bourne ? To the house of the Atreides, if you do not already know it—dwelling abhorred of Heaven—human shamle-house, and floor blood-bespattered.” Verily, says Bulwer, no prophet like the poet.

‡ “La prisonnière en entrant est fouillée, volée ; on ne lui laisse que son mouchoir ; couteau, ciseaux, argent, assignats, or et bijoux—tout est pris : vous entrez nu et dépouillé. Ce brigandage s'appelle *rapioter*. Les femmes offraient à la brutalité des geoliers tout ce qui pouvait éveiller leurs féroces désirs et leurs dégoûtants propos : les plus jeunes étaient déshabillées, fouillées : la cupidité satisfaite, la lubricité s'éveille ; et ces infortunées, les yeux baissés, tremblantes, éplorées devant ces bandits, ne pouvaient cacher à leurs yeux ce que la pudeur même dérober à l'amour trop heureux. Cet affreux brigandage a fait la fortune de ces monstres.”—*Tableaux des Prisons de Paris pendant la Terreur*, 1797, vol. ii. p. 84.

to be seen crowding to the windows, with pale and cadaverous countenances, striving through the bars to inhale the fresh air. Fathers and mothers, surrounded by their weeping children, long remained locked in each other's arms, in agonies of grief, when the fatal hour of separation arrived. The parents were in general absorbed in the solemn reflections which the near approach of death seldom fails to awaken ; but the children, with frantic grief, clung with their little hands round their necks, and loudly implored to be placed, still embraced in each other's arms, under the guillotine.¹

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¹ Tableau
des Prisons
de Paris
pendant la
Terreur, ii.
83, 87.
Deux Amis,
xii.204,207.

The condition of the prisoners in these jails of Paris, where above ten thousand persons were at last confined, was dreadful beyond what imagination could conceive.

20.
Frightful
condition of
the prison-
ers in the
jails.

“ No light ; but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe.
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell : hope never comes,
That comes to all ; but torture without end
Still urges.” *

The following description is from an eye-witness of these horrors : the fastidiousness of modern manners may revolt at some of its details, but the truth of history requires that they should be recorded. “ From the outer room, where examinations are conducted, you enter by two enormous doors into the dungeons—infected and damp abodes, where large rats carry on a continual war against the unhappy wretches who are there accumulated together, gnawing their ears, noses, and clothing, and depriving them of a moment's respite even by sleep. Hardly ever does daylight penetrate into these gloomy abodes : the straw which composes the litter of the prisoners soon becomes rotten from want of air, and from the ordure and excrement with which it is covered ; and such is the stench thence arising, that a stranger, on entering the door, feels as if he were suffocating. The prisoners are all either in

* *Paradise Lost*, i. 63.

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what are called the straw chambers or in the dungeons. Thus poverty is there regarded as a fresh crime, and leads to the most dreadful punishment ; for a lengthened abode in these horrid receptacles is worse than death itself. The dungeons are never opened but for inspection, to give food to the prisoners, or to empty the vases. The superior class of chambers, called the straw apartments, do not differ from the dungeons except in this, that their inhabitants are permitted to go out at eight in the morning, and to remain out till an hour before sunset. During the intervening period they are allowed to walk in the court, or huddle together in the galleries which surround it, where they are suffocated by infectious odours. There is the same accumulation of horror in their sleeping chambers : no air, rotten straw, and perhaps fifty prisoners thrust into one hole, with their heads lying on their own filth, surrounded by every species of dirt and contagion. Nor were these disgusting circumstances the only degradation which awaited the unhappy prisoners. No one could conceive the woeful state to which the human species can be reduced, who had not witnessed the calling of the roll in the evening, when three or four turnkeys, each with half-a-dozen fierce dogs held in a leash, call the unhappy prisoners to answer to their names, threatening, swearing, and insulting, while they are supplicating, weeping, imploring : often they ordered them to go out and come in three or four times over, till they were satisfied that the trembling troop was complete. The cells for the women were as horrid as those for the men, equally dark, humid, filthy, crowded, and suffocating : and it was there that all the rank and beauty of Paris was assembled.”¹

¹ Tableau
des Prisons
de Paris
pendant la
Terreur, i.
17, 19.
Hist. de la
Convention,
iii. 383, 386.

It was three in the afternoon when the melancholy procession set out from the Conciergerie ; the troop slowly passed through the vaulted passages of the prison, amidst crowds of captives, who gazed with insatiable avidity on the aspect of those about to undergo a fate which might

so soon become their own. The higher orders in general behaved with firmness and serenity; silently they marched to death, with their eyes fixed on the firmament, lest their looks should betray their indignation. Numbers of the lower class piteously bewailed their fate, and called heaven and earth to witness their innocence. The pity of the spectators was in a peculiar manner excited by the bands of females led out together to execution; fourteen young women of Verdun, of the most attractive forms, were cut off together. "The day after their execution," says Riouffe, "the court of the prison looked like a garden bereaved of its flowers by a tempest." On another occasion, twenty women of Poitou, chiefly the wives of peasants, were placed together on the chariot; some died on the way, and the wretches guillotined their lifeless remains: one kept her infant in her bosom till she reached the foot of the scaffold; the executioners tore the innocent from her breast, as she suckled it for the last time, and the screams of maternal agony were only stifled with her life. In removing the prisoners from the jail of the Maison Lazare, one of the women declared herself with child, and on the point of delivery: the hard-hearted jailers compelled her to move on: she did so, uttering piercing shrieks, and at length fell on the ground, and was delivered of an infant in presence of her persecutors.^{1*}

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21.

And of the
captives
who set out
for execu-
tion.¹Riouffe,
85, 87. Ta-
bleau, Hist.
de la Maison
Lazare, Rév.
Mém. xxiii.
226.

Such accumulated horrors annihilated all the charities and intercourse of life. Before daybreak the shops of the provision merchants were besieged by crowds of women and children clamouring for the food which the law of the maximum in general prevented them from obtaining. The farmers trembled to bring their produce to the market,

22.

Dreadful
espionage in
Paris, and
the other
towns.

* "Dans une de ces translations imaginées pour molester les malheureux prisonniers, Dumoutier se présenta à quatre heures de matin, suivi d'un grand chariot, pour enlever les citoyennes détenues. Une d'elles qui touchait au terme de sa grossesse, ayant été éveillée sans ménagement, ressentit une commotion subite qui lui présagea son prochain accouchement; elle demanda de rester quelques jours; on l'accusa de feinte, d'imposture; elle ne fut pas écoutée; ses prières réitérées, ses pleurs, les sollicitations de ses compagnons—

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the shopkeepers to expose it to sale. The richest quarters of the town were deserted ; no equipages or crowds of passengers were to be seen on the streets ; the sinister words, *Propriété Nationale*, imprinted in large characters on the walls, everywhere showed how far the work of confiscation had proceeded. Passengers hesitated to address their most intimate friends on meeting ; the extent of calamity had rendered men suspicious even of those they loved the most.

" Non ausus timuisse palam ; vox nulla dolori
Credita : sed quantum, volucres cum bruma coercet,
Rura silent, mediusque jacet sine murmure pontus,
Tanta quies." *

Every one assumed the coarsest dress, and the most squalid appearance ; an elegant exterior would have been the certain forerunner of destruction. At one hour only were any symptoms of animation to be seen ; it was when the victims were conveyed to execution. The humane fled with horror from the sight ; the infuriated rushed in crowds to satiate their eyes with the spectacle of human agony. Night came, but with it no diminution of the anxiety of the people. Every family early assembled its members ; with trembling looks they gazed round the room, fearful that the very walls might harbour traitors.† The sound of a foot, the stroke of a hammer, a voice in the street, froze all hearts with horror. If a knock was heard at the door, every one, in agonised suspense, expected his fate.¹ Unable to endure such protracted misery, num-

¹ Lac. ii. 151,
152. Toul.
iv. 235, 236.
Riouffe, 83.
Fréron, 49.
Th. vi. 318,
319. Deux
Amis, xii.
147, 150.

tout fut inutile ; il fallait cheminer avec les autres. Cette jeune infortunée se traina donc, soutenue par quelques hommes, jetant des cris de douleur et de désespoir ; à peine a-t-elle traversé le jardin et atteint le seuil de la porte que la crise redouble ; on n'a que le temps de l'introduire dans une chambre voisine ; elle tombe sur un lit, et accouche en présence de ce barbare, de ses sbires, et de toute la maison."—*Tableau de la Maison Lazare*, p. 226, vol. xxiii. ; *Rév. Mém.*

* LUCAN, *Pharsalia*, i. 258.

† " Omai le stragi,

Le violenze, le rapine, l'onte,

Son lieve male ; il pessimo è dei mali

L'alto tremor, che i cuori tutti ingombra :

bers committed suicide.* “Had the reign of Robespierre,” says Fréron, “continued longer, multitudes would have thrown themselves under the guillotine ; the first of social affections, the love of life, was already extinguished in almost every heart.”

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In the midst of these unparalleled atrocities, the Convention were occupied with the establishment of the civic virtues. Robespierre pronounced a discourse on the qualities suited to a republic. He dedicated a certain number of the decadal fêtes to the Supreme Being, to Truth, to Justice, to Modesty, to Friendship, to Frugality, to Good Faith, to Glory, and to Immortality ! Barère prepared a report on the suppression of mendicity, and the means of relieving the indigent poor. Robespierre had now reached the zenith of his popularity with his faction ; he was denominated the Great Man of the Republic ; his virtue, his genius, his eloquence, were in every mouth. The speech which he made on this occasion was one of the most remarkable of his whole career. “The idea,” said he, “of a Supreme Being, and of the immortality of the soul, is a continual call to justice ; it is therefore a social and republican principle. Who has authorised you to declare that the Deity does not exist ? O you who support in such impassioned strains so arid a doctrine, what advantage do you expect to derive from the principle that a blind fatality regulates the affairs of men, and that the soul is nothing but a breath of air impelled towards

23.
Robes-
pierre's
speech on
the Supreme
Being.
May 7.

Non che parlar, neppur osan mirarsi
L'un l'altro in volto i cittadini incerti :
Tanto è il sospetto e il diffidar, che trema
Del fratello il fratel, del figlio il padre :
Corrotti i vili, intimoriti i buoni,
Negletti i dubbii, trucidati i prodi,
Ed avviliti tutti : ecco qual sono
Quei già superbi cittadin di Roma,
Terror finora, oggi d'Italia scherno.”

ALFIERI, *Virginia*, Act iii. scene 2.

* “Pars animam laqueo claudunt, mortisque timorem
Morte fugant ; ultroque vocant venientia fata.”

OVID, *Metam.* vii. 605.

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the tomb ? Will the idea of annihilation inspire man with more pure and elevated sentiments than that of immortality ? will it awaken more respect for others or himself, more courage to resist tyranny, greater contempt for pleasure or death ? You who regret a virtuous friend, can you endure the thought that his noblest part has not escaped dissolution ? You who weep over the remains of a child or a wife, are you consoled by the thought that a handful of dust is all that remains of the beloved object ? You, the unfortunate, who expire under the strokes of an assassin, is not your last voice raised to appeal to the justice of the Most High ? Innocence on the scaffold, supported by such thoughts, makes the tyrant turn pale on his triumphal car. Could such an ascendant be felt, if the tomb levelled alike the oppressor and his victim ?

“ Observe how, on all former occasions, tyrants have sought to stifle the idea of the immortality of the soul. With what art did Cæsar, when pleading in the Roman Senate in favour of the accomplices of Catiline, endeavour to throw doubts on the belief of its immortality ; while Cicero invokes against the traitor the sword of the laws and the vengeance of Heaven ! Socrates, on the verge of death, discoursed with his friends on the ennobling theme ; Leonidas, at Thermopylæ, on the eve of executing the most heroic design ever conceived by man, invited his companions to a banquet in another world. The principles of the Stoics gave birth to Brutus and Cato, even in the ages which witnessed the expiry of Roman virtue ; they alone saved the honour of human nature, almost obliterated by the vices and the corruption of the Empire. The Encyclopedists contained some estimable characters, but a much greater number of ambitious rascals. Many of them became leading men in the state. Whoever does not study their influence and policy would form a most imperfect notion of our Revolution. It was they who introduced the frightful doctrine of atheism ; they were ever in

politics below the dignity of freedom ; in morality they went as far beyond the destruction of religious prejudices. Their disciples declaimed against despotism, and received the pensions of despots ; they composed alternately tirades against kings, and madrigals for their mistresses ; they were fierce with their pens, and rampant in antechambers. That sect propagated with infinite care the principles of Materialism, which spread so rapidly among the great and the beaux-esprits. We owe to them that selfish philosophy which reduced egotism to a system ; regarded human society as a game of chance, where success was the sole distinction between what was just and unjust ; probity as an affair of taste or good breeding ; the world as the patrimony of the most dexterous of scoundrels.

“ Among the great men of that period was one distinguished by the elevation of his soul and the greatness of his character, who showed himself a worthy preceptor of the human race.* He attacked tyranny with boldness ; he spoke with enthusiasm of the Deity. His masculine and upright eloquence drew in colours of fire the charms of virtue ; it defended the elevated doctrines which reason affords to console the human heart. The purity of his principles ; his profound hatred of vice, his supreme contempt for the intriguing sophists who usurped the name of philosophers, drew upon him the hatred and persecution of his rivals and his friends. Could he have witnessed our Revolution, of which he was the precursor, and which bore him to the Pantheon, can we doubt he would have embraced with transport the doctrine of justice and equality ? But what have the others done ? They have frittered away their opinions, sold themselves to the gold of D’Orléans, or withdrawn into a base neutrality. The

* Rousseau, whose remains had shortly before been translated to the Pantheon. Robespierre composed this eloquent speech in the cottage which Rousseau had inhabited at Montmorency, or in the forest of the same name—a striking proof of the influences which directed him, from the opening to the close of his eventful career.—See LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, viii. 175.

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men of letters in general have dishonoured themselves in this revolution ; and, to the eternal disgrace of talent, the reason of the people alone accomplished its triumphs.

“What strange coalitions have we seen, in persons embracing the most opposite opinions, in favour of the doctrines which I combat ! Have we not heard, in a popular society, the traitor Guadet denounce a citizen for having pronounced the name of Providence ? Have we not, some time after, heard Hébert accusing another of having written against atheism ? Was it not Vergniaud and Gensonné who, in your very presence, descanted with fervour from your tribune on the propriety of banishing from the preamble of the constitution the name of the Supreme Being, which you had placed there ? Danton, who smiled with scorn at the words glory, virtue, posterity—Danton, whose system it was to vilify whatever can dignify the mind—Danton, who was cold and mute in the midst of the greatest dangers of liberty, was warm and eloquent in support of the same atheistical principles. Whence so singular a union on this subject among men so divided on others ? Did they wish to compensate their indulgence for aristocracy and tyranny by their war against the Deity ? No ! it was because they all alike, though from different motives, strove to dry up the fountains of whatever is grand and generous in the human heart. They embraced with transport, to justify their selfish designs, a system which, confounding the destiny of the good and the bad, leaves no other difference between them but the casual distinctions of fortune—no other arbiter but the right of the strongest or the most deceitful.

“Fanatics ! hope nothing from us. To recall the worship of the Supreme Being is to level a mortal stroke at fanaticism. Fiction in the end disappears before truth, folly before reason : unrestrained, unpersecuted, all sects should be lost in the universal religion of nature. Ambitious priests ! do not expect us to restore your reign. Such an enterprise would be beyond our power.—(Loud

applause.) Priests are to morality what charlatans are to medicine. How different is the God of nature from the God of the church!—(Loud applause.) The priests have figured to themselves a god in their own image ; they have made him jealous, capricious, cruel, covetous, implacable ; they have enthroned him in the heavens as a palace, and called him to the earth only to demand, for their behoof, tithes, riches, pleasures, honours, and power. The true temple of the Supreme Being is the universe ; his worship, virtue ; his fêtes, the joy of a great people, assembled under his eyes to draw closer the bonds of social affection, and present to him the homage of pure and grateful hearts.” In the midst of the acclamations produced by these eloquent words, the Convention decreed unanimously that they recognised the existence of the Supreme Being, and the immortality of the soul, and that the worship most worthy of him was the practice of the social virtues.¹

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May 7.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxii, 368,
369.

This speech is not only remarkable as containing the religious views of so memorable an actor in the bloodiest periods of the Revolution, but as involving a moral lesson of perhaps greater moment than any that has occurred in the history of mankind. For the first time in the annals of mankind, a great nation had thrown off all religious principle, and openly defied the power of Heaven itself ; and from amidst the wreck which was occasioned by the unchaining of human passions, arose a solemn recognition of the Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul ! It seemed as if Providence had permitted human wickedness to run its utmost length, in order, amidst the frightful scene, to demonstrate the necessity of religious belief, and vindicate the majesty of its moral government. In vain an infidel generation sought to establish the frigid doctrine of Materialism, and extinguish all belief of an existence or retribution hereafter. Their principles received their full development ; the anarchy they are fitted to induce was experienced, and that recognition

24.
Reflections
on this
speech.

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was wrung from a suffering which had been denied by a prosperous age. Nor is this speech less striking as evincing the fanaticism of that extraordinary period, and the manner in which, during revolutionary convulsions, the most atrocious actions are made to flow from the purest and most benevolent expressions. If you consider the actions of Robespierre, he appears the most sanguinary tyrant that ever desolated the earth; if you reflect on his words, they seem dictated only by the noblest and most elevated feelings. There is nothing impossible in such a combination; the history of the world exhibits too many examples of its occurrence. It is the nature of fanaticism, whether religious or political, to produce it. The inquisition of Spain, the crusade against the Albigeois, the fires of Smithfield, the *autos-da-fé* of Castile, arose from the same principles as the daily executions of the French tyrant. It is because revolutions lead to such terrible results, by so flowery and seductive a path, that they are chiefly dangerous; and because the ruin thus induced is irrevocable, that the seducers of nations are doomed by inexorable justice to the same infamy as the betrayers of individuals.

25.

Unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Robespierre and Collot d'Herbois, May 24.

Two unsuccessful attempts at assassination increased, as is always the case, the power of the tyrants. The first of these was made by an obscure, but intrepid man, of the name of L'Amiral, who tried to assassinate Collot d'Herbois; the second, against Robespierre, by a young woman, named Cécile Renaud. L'Amiral, when brought before his judges, openly avowed that he had intended to assassinate Robespierre before Collot d'Herbois.* When

* The following letter, found among Robespierre's papers, shows with what feelings he was regarded at the time by his partisans:—"J'ai été saisi d'horreur en apprenant les dangers que tu as courus; rassure-toi, brave républicain! L'Etre Suprême, dont tu viens de prouver l'existence, veille sur tes jours; ils seront conservés malgré tes ennemis nombreux, et la République sera sauvée. On t'a tendu un piège en t'offrant pour demeure le palais national; garde-toi de l'accepter: on ne peut être ami du peuple et habiter un palais."—*Citizen D. à ROBESPIERRE*, 12 *Prairial*, An. 2. *Papiers inédits trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 132.

called on to divulge who prompted him to the commission of such a crime, he replied firmly—"That it was not a crime ; that he wished only to render a service to his country ; that he had conceived the project without any external suggestion ; and that his only regret was that he had not succeeded." Cécile called at Robespierre's house, and entreated in the most earnest manner to see him ; the urgency of her manner excited the suspicion of his attendants, and she was arrested. Two knives, found in her bundle, afforded a presumption as to the purpose of her visit ; but there was no other evidence against her, and she positively denied on her examination having intended to injure any one. Being asked what was her motive for wishing to see him, she replied—"I wished to see how a tyrant was made. I admit I am a Royalist, because I prefer one king to fifty thousand." She behaved on the scaffold, when executed, in accordance with the sentence of the Revolutionary Tribunal, some weeks after, with the firmness of Charlotte Corday. L'Amiral, turning to Cécile Renaud, and gazing on the multitude, said, "You wished to see how one tyrant was made : there are hundreds under your eyes." The cortège consisted of eight chariots ; and the beauty of the women seated in them, as well as the scarlet robes in which they were arrayed, excited unusual attention. A great number of other persons, sixty in all, were involved in Cécile Renaud's fate, among whom were a number of young men brought from the frontier, where they had been bravely combating in defence of their country. Her father, aunt, and brother, were doomed along with her, though she solemnly protested their innocence, and there was not a vestige of evidence against them. Among the rest was a youth named Hypolite Montmorency Laval, of distinguished talents and fine figure, whose only offence was the name he bore and the genius he had inherited : M. de Sombreuil, and M. Michonis, jailor of the Temple, accused of humanity to its illustrious inmates, the Prince de St Maurice,

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an elegant actress, Grandmaison, accused of no other crime but having awakened the love of M. Sartines, and a beautiful young woman, Mademoiselle Saint Amaranthe, a friend of Robespierre, who was executed with her mother for an expression accidentally dropped when in company with himself, at dinner at his own house, on the number of deputies who were about to be brought to punishment. The whole sixty were conducted together in red shirts to the place of execution, as if they had all been assassins; though not one stroke had been given, and hardly one knew another even by sight. The trial of the whole before the Revolutionary Tribunal occupied only two hours.* Fouquier Tinville was indignant at their firmness. "I must get," said he, "with the cortège to the scaffold, should it cost me my dinner, to see if they will brazen it out to the last."† Robespierre strongly opposed, in the Committee of Public Salvation, the proposal to include Mademoiselle Saint Amaranthe in the prosecution, which was brought forward by Vadier. "I propose," said the latter, "to make my report on the project of assassination, and I will include the family Saint Amaranthe in it." "You shall do no such thing," said Robespierre, in a haughty tone. "I have the proofs," replied Vadier, "and I shall bring them all forward." "Proofs or no proofs," resumed Robespierre; "if you do, I will attack you." "You are the tyrant of the Committee," exclaimed Vadier. "I the tyrant of the Committee!" rejoined Robespierre: "well, I free you from my tyranny: I retire. Save the country without me if you can: as for me, my mind is made up; I will not play the part of Cromwell." He withdrew, and was not again at the dreadful Committee.¹ But though convinced of her inno-

¹ Moniteur, May 29.
Deux Amis, xii. 302, 305.
Mig. ii. 322.
Lac. ii. 162, 163. Th. vi. 321, 323, 326. Bull. du Trib. Rév. No. 64. Lam. Hist. des Gir. viii. 225, 259, 262.

* "Voyez," dit Fouquier, 'comme elles sont effrontées! Il faut que j'aie le voir monter sur l'échafaud pour m'assurer si elles conserveront ce caractère, dussé-je me passer de dîner.'—PRUDHOMME, v. 277.

† Mademoiselle Saint Amaranthe looked so beautiful with the scarlet robe reflected on her cheeks, that in a fortnight all the Parisian ladies had red shawls 'à la Sainte Amaranthe.'—*Deux Amis*, xii. 302.

cence, Robespierre had not the courage to defend Made-moiselle St Amaranthe and her family in the Convention, where a word from him might have averted their fate. Such is the slavery in democratic times under which statesmen lie to public opinion. But this pusillanimity led to its own punishment, for it caused the people to ascribe all the executions to Robespierre, when in reality he had come to disapprove of them, and thus prepared the public mind to rejoice at his fall.

The Committee of Public Salvation took advantage of the sensation produced by this unsuccessful attempt, to bring forward a proposal for the refusing of quarter to the British and Hanoverian troops. On 29th May, Barère read in the Convention the report of that ruling Committee, which recounted all the hostilities of Great Britain, and accused that power as being the instigator of these conspiracies. "Too long," said he, "we have slept on conspiracies; the plots of Danton and Hébert have not awakened us. Yet a few days of impunity to the English and Austrians, and the country will become only a heap of ruins and ashes, covered with the crimes and vengeance of despotism. Let us, then, declare war to the death with the English and Hanoverians. Soldiers of liberty! when the chances of war shall throw an English or Hanoverian into your hands, think of the ashes of Toulon and of La Vendée. Strike! None should return to the liberticide shores of Britain, nor enter the free realms of France. Let the English slaves perish, and Europe will be free." On this report the Convention decreed *unanimously*,—"No prisoner shall be taken from the English or Hanoverians."* Robespierre spoke with singular satisfaction of this bloody resolution: "It will," said he, "be a noble subject of contemplation to posterity—it is already a spectacle worthy of the attention of earth and heaven, to see the Representative Assembly of the French people,

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26.
Decree
against giv-
ing quarter
to the Bri-
tish and
Hano-
verians.

* "Il ne sera aucun prisonnier Anglais ou Hanovrien."—*Décret*, 7 Prairial, 1794 (29th May)—*Moniteur*, 29 Mai 1794.

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placed on the inexhaustible volcano of conspiracies—with the one hand bear to the Eternal Author of all things the homage of a great people, and with the other launch the thunderbolt against the tyrants, and recall to the world the flying footsteps of liberty, justice, and virtue. They shall perish, the tyrants leagued against the French people: they shall perish, all the factions which are leagued with them for the destruction of our liberties. You will not make peace, but you will give it to the world, you will take it from crime. (Loud applause.)”¹

¹ Moniteur,
May 29,
1794.

27.
Fête in
honour of
the Supreme
Being, and
speech of
Robespierre.
June 7.

Meanwhile, a magnificent fête was prepared by the Convention in honour of the Supreme Being. Two days before it took place, Robespierre was appointed President, and intrusted with the duty of Supreme Pontiff on the occasion. He marched fifteen feet in advance of his colleagues, in a brilliant costume, bearing flowers and fruits in his hands. His address to the people, which followed, was both powerful and eloquent. “God,” said he, “*has not created kings to devour the human race; He has not created priests to harness them like vile animals to the chariots of kings, and to exhibit to the world examples of perfidy, avarice, and baseness; but He has created the universe to attest His power, and man to aid Him in the glorious undertaking—to love his fellows, and arrive at happiness by the path of virtue. It is He who placed in the bosom of the triumphant oppressor remorse and terror, and in the heart of the oppressed innocent calmness and resolution; it is He who compels the just man to hate the wicked, and the wicked to respect the just; it is He who makes the mother’s womb leap with tenderness and joy, and bathes with delicious tears the eyes of a son pressed against his mother’s bosom; it is He who causes the most imperious passions to yield to the love of country; it is He who has covered nature with charms, with riches, and majesty. All that is good flows from Him, or rather is a part of Himself. Evil springs from depraved man who oppresses, or permits the oppression*

of his fellow-creatures. The Author of Nature, in engraving, with His immortal hand, on the heart of man the code of justice and equality, has traced the sentence of death against tyrants. He has bound together all mortals by the chain of love—perish the tyrants who would venture to break it!”¹

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxiii. 179.

These eloquent words excited, as well they might, the warmest hopes in all present that Robespierre was about to put his principles in practice, and at length bring the reign of blood to a close. But they were speedily dashed to the earth by the words which closed his address—

28.

The hopes it
awakened
are all de-
stroyed by
his conclud-
ing words.

“People! to-day let us give ourselves up to the transports of pure happiness; to-morrow we shall with increased energy combat vice and the tyrants!” The ceremony on this occasion, which was arranged under the direction of the painter David, was very magnificent. An amphitheatre was placed in the gardens of the Tuileries, opposite to which were statues representing Atheism, Discord, and Selfishness, which were destined to be burned by the hand of Robespierre. Beautiful music opened the ceremony, and the president, after an eloquent speech, seized a torch, and set fire to the figures, which were soon consumed; and when the smoke cleared away, an effigy of Wisdom was seen in their place, but it was remarked that it was blackened by the conflagration of those that had been consumed. Thence they proceeded to the Champ de Mars, where patriotic songs were sung, oaths taken by the young, and homage offered to the Supreme Being.²

² Deux
Amis, xii.
309, 310.
Hist. Parl.
xxxiii. 179.
Th. vi. 340,
342. Mig.
ii. 322.

These measures and declarations on the part of Robespierre produced a great impression in Europe. Foreign nations who had been horrified by the awful catastrophes of the Reign of Terror, had seen with undisguised satisfaction the execution of Danton and his party, who had commenced the Revolution, and brought the King to the scaffold; and of Hébert and the Anarchists, who had carried its atrocities and impiety to their most dreadful

29.

Great im-
pression
produced
by these
steps in
Europe.

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length. When, therefore, they beheld the government which had effected their destruction expressing such humane sentiments, in such beautiful language, the hope became general that a reaction had at length set in : that Robespierre had acquired the mastery of the Revolution, and that out of the excess of anarchy had arisen the power which could coerce it. Foreign powers, accordingly, began to entertain sanguine hopes that the Revolution had reached its limit, and that a government had at last arisen with which it might be practicable to negotiate, and possibly conclude a durable peace.¹

¹ Hard. ii.
452. Hist.
Parl. 389,
391.

30.
Great power
now enjoyed
by Robes-
pierre.

The effect of these steps was not less remarkable in France itself. At the fête of the Supreme Being, on 7th June, the power of Robespierre appeared to have reached such a point, that, far beyond that of any king, it more nearly resembled that of a god upon earth. "Never," says an eye-witness, "had the sun shone with a brighter radiance : never was a more joyous and enthusiastic concourse of spectators assembled. Robespierre himself was astonished at the immense crowd of people who filled the gardens of the Tuileries. Hope and gaiety beamed from every countenance ; the smiling looks and elegant costume of the women diffused a universal enchantment. As he marched along, overshadowed by his plumes, adorned with his tricolor scarf, the air resounded with cries of 'Vive Robespierre !' and his countenance was radiant with joyfulness. Alexander, when declared the son of Jupiter by the oracle of Ammon, was not more proud. 'See how they applaud him !' said his colleagues. 'He would become a god ! he is no longer the high-priest of the Supreme Being.' " The Committee of Public Salvation being now avowedly in possession of supreme power, their adulators in the Convention and Jacobin Club offered them the ensigns of sovereignty. But they had the good sense to perceive that the people were not yet prepared for this change, and that the sight of guards or a throne might shake a power against which two hundred thousand

captives in chains could not arouse resistance. "The members of the Committee," said Couthon, "have no desire to be assimilated to despots; they have no need of guards for their defence; their own virtue, the love of the people, Providence, watch over their days; they have no occasion for any other protection. When necessary, they will know how to die at their post in defence of freedom." Even as it was, the jealousy of the people was aroused by the undisguised supremacy assigned to Robespierre at the ceremony: whispers were heard, that "he would be a god." * "He is only teaching the Republic to adore another, that its members may one day adore himself," said one. "He has invented God, because he is the supreme tyrant," said another; "he would be his high-priest."¹

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¹ Vilate,
Causes, &c.
de la Rév.
du 9.
Therm. 196.
Sénart, 188,
189. Hist.
Parl. xxxiii.
176, 178.
Th. vi. 329.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. viii.
209.

But the retreat from crime is not to nations, any more than individuals, on a path strewn with flowers; and many and woful were the calamities through which France had to pass, before it regained the peace and security of a settled government. This was speedily demonstrated. The bloody intentions announced by Robespierre were too effectually carried into execution on the third day following the fête of the Supreme Being, by the decree of the 22d Prairial, for increasing the powers of the Revolutionary Tribunal, passed on the motion of Couthon. By this sanguinary law, every form, privilege, or usage, calculated to protect the accused, were swept away. "Every postponement of justice," said Couthon, "is a crime; every formality indulgent to the accused is a crime: the delay in punishing the enemies of the country should not be greater than the time requisite for identifying them." The right of prosecution was extended to the Convention, the Committee of Public Salvation, the Committee of General Safety, the commissioners of the Convention, and the public accuser; no distinction was to be made between

31.
Additional
powers conferred on the
Revolutionary Tribunal.
June 10.
22d Prairial.

* "Je tiens d'une personne qui l'a entendu aux Tuileries le jour de la fête ce mot énergique d'un vrai Sans-culotte—Voyez ce b——là! ce n'est pas assez d'être le maître: il faut encore qu'il soit un dieu."—VILATE, *Mystères de la Mère de Dieu Dévoilés*, 32.

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members of the Convention and ordinary individuals. The right of insisting for an individual investigation, and of being defended by counsel, had been withdrawn by a previous decree on the 2d June. In addition to those struck at by former laws, there were included in this new decree, "all those who have seconded the projects of the enemies of France, either by favouring the retreat of, or shielding from punishment, the aristocracy or conspirators; or by persecuting and calumniating the patriots; or by corrupting the mandatories of the people; or by abusing the principles of the Revolution, of the laws, or of the government, by false or perfidious applications; or by deceiving the representatives of the people; or by spreading discouragement or false intelligence; or by misleading the public by false instructions or depraved example." The proof requisite to convict of these multifarious offences was declared to be—"Every piece of evidence, material, moral, verbal, or written, which is sufficient to convince a reasonable understanding." The Revolutionary Tribunal was divided into four separate courts, each possessing the same powers as the original, a public accuser, and a sufficient number of judges and jurymen awarded to each, to enable them to proceed with rapidity in the work of extermination.¹

¹ Décret, 22 Prairial (June 10.) Hist. Parl. xxxiii. 193, 194. Moniteur, 10 Juin. Lac. ii. 160, 161.

32.

Debate on it in the Convention, and remarkable speech on it by Robespierre.

Accustomed as the Convention was to blind obedience, they were startled by this project. "I demand an adjournment. If this law passes, nothing remains," said Ruamps, "but to blow out our brains." Alarmed at the agitation which prevailed, Robespierre mounted the Tribune. "For long," said he, "the Assembly has argued and decided on the same day, because for long it has been liberated from the empire of faction. Two opinions, strongly pronounced, divide the Republic. The one is to punish severely and inexorably all attempts against liberty; the other is the cowardly and criminal opinion of the aristocracy, who have never ceased since the commencement of the Revolution to demand, directly or

indirectly, an amnesty for the conspirators and enemies of the country. For two months the Convention has sat under the sword of assassins ; and the very moment when liberty appears to have gained its greatest triumph, is precisely the one when the conspirators against the country act with most audacity. Citizens, be assured the conspirators wish to divide—they wish to intimidate us ! Have we not defended a part of the Assembly* against the poniards which wickedness and a false zeal would have drawn against them ? We expose ourselves to individual assassins to destroy those who would ruin the Republic. We know how to die, provided the Convention and the country are saved. I demand that the project be discussed, article by article, and without an adjournment. I have observed that for long the Convention has discussed and decreed at once, because a great majority were really intent on the public good. I demand that, instead of pausing on the proposal for adjournment, we sit till eight at night, if necessary, to discuss the project of the law which has now been submitted to it.” The Convention knew their master, and in *thirty minutes* the law was passed.¹

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxiii. 198,
202. Moni-
teur, 12
Juin. Lac.
ii. 160, 161.

On the following day some members, chiefly adherents of the old party of Danton, endeavoured to overthrow this sanguinary decree of the Assembly. Bourdon de l'Oise proposed that the safety of the members of the Convention should be provided for by a special enactment, to the effect that they should not be indicted but in pursuance of a decree of that body. He was ably supported by Merlin ; and the Legislature seemed inclined to adopt the proposal. Couthon attacked the Mountain, from which the opposition seemed chiefly to emanate. Bourdon replied—“ Let the members of the Committee know,” said he, “ that if they are patriots, so are we. I esteem Couthon, I esteem the Committee ; but, more than all, I esteem the unconquerable Mountain, which has saved the

^{33.}
Ineffectual
efforts to
modify the
law.

* The seventy-three arrested Girondists, who had not been tried with their leaders in the October preceding.

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxiii. 203,
217. Mig. ii.
325. Lac. ii.
170. Th. vi.
350-353.
Hist. de la
Conv. iii.
367.

public freedom.”—“The Convention, the Committee, the Mountain,” said Robespierre, “are the same thing. Every representative who loves liberty, every representative who is resolved to die for his country, is part of the Mountain. Woe to those who would assassinate the people, by permitting some miserable intriguers to divide the patriots, in order to elevate themselves on the public ruin!” The imperious tone of Robespierre, the menaces of his colleagues, again overawed the Assembly, and the law passed without the protecting clause proposed by Bourdon. Every individual in the Convention was now at the mercy of the Dictators; and the daily spectacle of fifty persons executed, was enough to subdue more undaunted spirits.¹

34.
Robes-
pierre's
secret mo-
tives in pass-
ing this law.

It is not surprising that the Convention, in this manner, made an unwonted effort to avert the passing of this terrible law; for the consciences of many told them, what is now known to have been the case, that its almost unlimited powers were mainly directed against themselves. From the invaluable papers found in Robespierre's possession after his death, by Courtois, and first published in 1828,* it is now known that the secret views of Robespierre, in proposing this sanguinary law, were to destroy a large portion of the Convention. He had great confidence in himself and the influence of his eloquence with the people; and he still clung with fanatical obstinacy to the belief in their virtue. But he had seen enough to distrust the integrity of nearly all who had risen to power, or were intrusted with office. The idol of public opinion, he desired to rule by it alone, and had no doubt of his ability to do so. He was in despair at the universal profligacy, selfishness, and corruption with which he was surrounded in all the branches of administration, civil and military. Universal suffrage and

* “Papiers inédits trouvés chez Robespierre, St Just, Payan, &c. Paris, 1828. 3 vols.” They had been in great part, in the first instance, suppressed by Courtois; and a complete set was first published by the French government on his death, in 1828.

self government, instead of having produced a better set of public functionaries than those who had owed their appointment to the nobility, had brought up one so *infinitely worse*, that Robespierre, the incarnation of the democratic principle, felt that the first step in social regeneration must be to destroy them all. He was overwhelmed with horror at the situation of the commonwealth, and the total failure of the vast streams of blood he had caused to flow to produce any, even the slightest, practical amelioration in the administration of affairs. He constantly said—"All is lost ; we have no longer any resource : I see no one to save the country."* He often said, "Woe to those who deem the country centred in themselves, and who make use of liberty as of their own property. Their country dies with them ; and the revolutions which they have appropriated are but a change of servitude. No Cromwell for France, not even myself."

* "Son âme était profondément ulcérée : quoique dans les procès d'Hébert, de Danton, et de Chaumette, une foule de personnages bien dignes de l'échafaud eussent été justement frappés, il déplorait néanmoins que de viles passions, que la haine et la vengeance, et non pas l'amour de la patrie et de l'équité, eussent discerné et marqué les têtes qu'il fallait abattre. Il voyait que les exécutions n'avaient en rien diminué les dangers. Autour de lui, aux premiers postes de la République, il voyait des hommes sans probité, sans mœurs, souillés pour la plupart d'actes infâmes, et cependant environnés d'une popularité à travers laquelle il était presque impossible de les atteindre. Il voyait se grouper autour d'eux d'autres hommes qui n'avaient aidé la bonne cause que par toutes sortes de mauvais moyens, et qui déployaient maintenant pour se défendre eux-mêmes toutes les ressources de l'intrigue, du mensonge, et de la calomnie, avec l'habileté qu'ils avaient acquise par une pratique de six années. Ainsi il était en proie au dégoût et au désespoir. Qu'importait que nos armées fussent victorieuses de l'étranger ? A l'intérieur et dans le centre même de sa force et de sa puissance, la nation était possédée par des scélérats. N'était-il pas évident que l'anarchie, la contre-révolution, et la restauration de l'ancien régime, étaient les conséquences prochaines et inévitables d'un tel état de choses ? Pendant les derniers jours qu'il fréquenta les comités, Robespierre disait habituellement—'Tout est perdu ; il n'y a plus de ressources : Je ne vois plus personne pour sauver la patrie.' Il proposa la loi du 22 Prairial dans l'unique but de créer un pouvoir à brider, dont il préméditait de se servir en temps opportun pour épurer la Convention. St Just était absent, il communiqua son projet à Couthon seulement, et celui-ci se chargea du rapport. Billaud, Collot, Barère, et Vadier, n'en ont eu connaissance que par le rapport de Couthon, et ils ont repoussé cette loi dans le sein du comité, avec plus d'énergie que l'Assemblée elle-même n'en avait mis à la critiquer."—*Histoire Parlementaire*, xxxiii. 182, 183.

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But meanwhile a very formidable opposition was secretly organising itself in the Convention. The project of this law, as it struck at nearly all the members both of the government and the Convention, was accordingly warmly combated in both the Committees and the latter. It was brought forward in the latter with the knowledge only of Couthon, and, as soon as the discussion was over, it was vehemently assailed in the Committee of Public Salvation.* The truth was, that Robespierre, St Just, and Couthon, now stood nearly alone there : they beheld the legislature and whole offices of government, from the highest to the lowest, filled by such an infamous set of scoundrels, whom universal suffrage had brought up to the head of affairs, that they could see no chance for the Republic but in extending extermination to nearly the whole persons in authority in the state.¹†

Armed by this accession of power, the proscriptions proceeded during the next six weeks with redoubled

* “ Le len demain du 22 Prairial, Billaud Varennes accuse hautement Robespierre aussitôt qu’il entre au comité, et lui reproche d’avoir porté à la Convention seul avec Couthon le décret abominable que faisait l’effroi des patriotes. ‘Le jour,’ ajoute Billaud, ‘où un membre du comité se permettra de présenter seul un décret à la Convention, il n’y a plus de liberté mais la volonté d’un seul.’ ‘Je vois bien,’ dit Robespierre, ‘que je suis seul, et que personne ne me soutient ;’ et aussitôt il déclama avec fureur. Ses cris étaient si forts, que sur les terrasses des Tuileries plusieurs citoyens s’étaient rassemblés. On ferma les fenêtres, et l’on continua la discussion avec la même chaleur. ‘Je sais,’ dit Robespierre, ‘qu’il y a dans la Convention une faction qui veut me perdre, et tu défends ici Ruamps.’ ‘Il faut donc dire,’ reprend Billaud, ‘d’après ton décret, que tu veux guillotiner la Convention.’ Robespierre répond avec agitation, ‘Vous en êtes tous témoins que je ne dis pas que je veuille faire guillotiner la Convention Nationale : je te connais maintenant,’ ajouta-t-il en s’adressant à Billaud. ‘Et moi aussi, je te connais comme un Anti-révolutionnaire,’ répond le dernier. Robespierre s’agita, se promenant dans le comité ; il porta son hypocrisie jusqu’à répandre des larmes.’—LECOTRE *de Versailles, Réponse des deux Membres des Comités*, Nov. 8 ; *Hist. Parl.* xxxiii. 184, 185.

† Among the very interesting papers found in Robespierre’s house after his death, was the following note in his own handwriting, as to the character of some of the leading members of the Convention, whose coalition soon after produced his overthrow :—“ Tous les chefs de la Révolution sont des scélérats déjà notés par des traits d’immoralité et d’infamie. *Thuriot* ne fut jamais qu’un partisan d’Orléans ; son silence depuis la chute de Danton, et depuis son expulsion des Jacobins, contraste avec son bavardage éternel avant cette époque. Il

¹ *Hist. Parl.* xxxiii. 182, 185. *Lam. Hist. des Gir.* viii. 266.

violence. The power of the Committee of Public Salvation was prodigious, and wielded with an energy to which there is nothing comparable in the history of modern Europe. The ruling principle of that extraordinary government was to destroy the whole aristocracy both of rank and talent. Power of intellect, independence of thought, was in an especial manner the object of the Dictator's jealousy ; he regarded it with more aversion than the aristocracy either of birth or wealth.^{1*} It was on this foundation that his authority rested ; the mass of the people ardently supported a government which was rapidly destroying everything which was above them in station, or superior in ability. Every man felt his own consequence increased, and his own prospects improved, by the destruction of his more able or more fortunate rivals. Inexorable towards individuals or leaders, Robespierre was careful of protecting the masses of the community ; and the lower orders, who always

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35.

Increased
violence of
the govern-
ment.
Means by
which the
support of
the people
was secured.¹ Brissot's
Mémoires,
ii. 22.

se borne à intriguer sourdement et à s'agiter beaucoup à la Montagne, lorsque le Comité du Salut Public propose une mesure fatale aux factions. *Bourdon de l'Oise* s'est couvert de crimes dans La Vendée, où il s'est donné le plaisir, dans ses orgies avec le traître Tunk, de tuer des volontaires de sa main. Il joint la perfidie à la fureur. Il a été le plus fougueux défenseur de l'athéisme. Il n'a cessé de faire du décret qui proclame l'existence de l'Etre Suprême un moyen de susciter dans la Montagne des ennemis au gouvernement—et il a réussi. Le jour de la fête, en présence du peuple, il s'est permis sur ce sujet les plus grossiers sarcasmes, et les déclamations les plus indécentes. *Léonard Bourdon*—intrigant méprisé de tous les temps, l'un des principaux complices, ami inséparable de Cloutz ; il était initié dans la conspiration tramée chez Gobel. Rien n'égale la bassesse des intrigues qu'il mit en œuvre pour grossir le nombre de ses pensionnaires. Il était aux Jacobins l'un des orateurs les plus intarissables pour propager les doctrines d'Hébert."—*Notes écrites de la main de ROBESPIERRE ; Papiers inédits de ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 37, and iii. 111 ; and *Hist. Parl.* xxxiii. 168, 172.

* " Quel est le but ? L'exécution de la constitution en faveur du peuple.—Quels seront nos ennemis ? Les hommes vicieux et les riches.—Il faut donc éclairer le peuple : mais quels sont les obstacles à l'instruction du peuple ? Les écrivains mercénaires, qui l'égarent par des impostures journalières et impudentes.—Que conclure de là ? Qu'il faut proscrire les écrivains comme les plus dangereux ennemis de la patrie.—Quels sont les moyens de terminer la guerre civile ? 1. *Proscription des écrivains perfides et contre-révolutionnaires ;* propagation de bons écrits. 2. Punition des traîtres et conspirateurs. 3. Nomination des généreux patriotes, destitution des autres. 4. Subsistance et lois populaires."—*Catéchisme écrit par la main de ROBESPIERRE. Papiers inédits trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 13.

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have a secret pleasure in the depression of their superiors, beheld with satisfaction the thunder which rolled innocuous over their heads, striking every one who could by possibility stand in their way. The whole physical strength of the Republic, which must always be drawn from the labouring classes, was thus devoted to his will. The armed force of Paris, under the orders of Henriot, and formed of the lowest of the rabble, was at his disposal ; the Club of the Jacobins, purified and composed according to his orders, were ready to support all his projects ; the Revolutionary Tribunal blindly obeyed his commands ; the new municipality, with Henriot at its head, was devoted to his will. By the activity of the Jacobin clubs, and the universal maintenance of the same interests, a similar state of things prevailed in every department of France. Universally the lowest class considered Robespierre as identified with the Revolution, and as centring in his person all the projects of aggrandisement which were afloat in their minds. His speeches and measures breathed that ardent wish for the amelioration of the working classes, by the division of property and extirpation of capital, which afterwards, under the name of socialism and communism, and guided by the genius of Lamartine and Louis Blanc, so strongly agitated France and Europe. None remained to contest his authority, but the remnants of the Constitutional and Girondist parties, who still lingered in the Convention.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, xii.
338, 340.
Mig. ii. 326,
327.

36.
Decree
establishing
the Poly-
technic
School.
June 1.

In pursuance of these principles, the government of Robespierre, amidst all its severity to those who were either elevated by birth, possessed of fortune, distinguished by talent, or allied by habit or inclination to any of these higher classes, had made several steps towards the establishment of institutions designed for the elevation and relief of the labouring poor, and which, if combined with a just and rational government in other respects, might have been attended with the most salutary effects. "Education," said Barère, in the name of the Committee of

Public Salvation, "is the greatest blessing which man can receive : it is the only one which the vicissitudes of time cannot take away. The incalculable advantage of revolutions is, that merit obtains the rank which is due to it, and that each citizen fills the situation for which he is qualified by the species of talent which he possesses. The republican, therefore, should be instructed in such a manner, as to be prepared for every situation either of peace or of war." In pursuance of these principles, it was decreed that six young men should be sent to Paris from every district in the Republic, to be educated at the public expense in the *Ecole de Mars*, and placed under the immediate direction of the Committee of Public Salvation, to be instructed in the art of war and fortification. This was immediately carried into effect, and became the foundation of the far-famed Polytechnic School, which furnished such an inexhaustible supply of skilled officers for the armies of the empire.¹

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¹ Decree,
June 1.
Hist. Parl.
xxxii. 134.

The frightful misery in the interior of the empire, the natural result of the Revolution, at the same time attracted the attention of government, and they prepared to meet it in a noble spirit. "While the cannon," said Carnot, in the name of the Committee of Public Salvation, "thunders on the frontier, *mendicity*, that scourge of monarchies, has made frightful progress in the interior. Yet it is an evil disgraceful to a republic, incompatible with a popular government. The shameful word *beggar* should be unknown in a republican dictionary, and the picture of mendicity on the earth has hitherto been nothing but that of constant conspiracies of the class of proprietors against that of non-proprietors. Let us leave to insolent despotism the construction of hospitals, to bury the unfortunates whom it has created, or to support for a moment the slaves whom it could not devour. That horrible generosity of the despot aids him in deceiving the people. Despotism has favoured the mendicants, only because they were base and suppliant. But what has it

^{37.} Admirable
measures
for the re-
lief of pau-
perism.

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done for the general wide-spread indigence of the country ? What for tottering age or helpless infancy ? What for the bereaved widow or the weeping orphan ? Nothing ; because they were independent, and would rather perish than fall at its feet. The true principles of beneficence are to succour, *in their own homes, infancy and youth, where it is destitute ; manhood, where it is sick or without employment ; old age, where it is impotent or infirm.*" In pursuance of these just and enlightened principles, a great variety of regulations were brought forward and decreed for the relief, *in their own homes*—not in hospitals or by money charity—of orphan and destitute children, and their education ; for the succour of middle-aged men and women in a state of temporary destitution ; and for the permanent support of widows, the aged, and the impotent, as well as those who had been mutilated in the public service, and their widows and children.—“*Fas est et ab hoste doceri.*” The true principles of the management of the poor are to be found in the report of the Committee of Public Salvation, and regular governments will never act so wisely for their own as well as their people’s interest, as when they take this leaf out of the book of their enemies.¹*

¹ See Decree, May 20. Hist. Parl. xxxiii. 24, 56.

38.
Remarkable speech of Robespierre on the principles of his government.

Robespierre, shortly before his fall, thus summed up the principles of his administration : “I have spoken of the virtue of the people ; but that virtue, demonstrated by the whole Revolution, would not alone suffice to defend us against the factions who never cease to corrupt and

* The provisions of this law, evidently drawn up by Robespierre, and agreed to by the Committee of Public Salvation and the Convention, are very remarkable, and may serve as a model for many governments, which in other respects with justice deery their proceedings. Its details are far too minute for a work of general history, but the principles on which they were founded were these :—
1. That the succour of the destitute, the orphans, and the impotent, is a duty of the state, and should be discharged by the public functionaries, and from the state funds. 2. That the distribution of relief should be made by a public officer, to be appointed for that purpose in each of the departments of the Republic. 3. That in each department there shall be opened a register, to be entitled “Book of National Beneficence,” in which shall be a title, 1st, For infirm or aged cultivators ; 2d, For infirm or aged artisans ; 3d, For mothers

tear asunder the Republic. Why is that? Because there are two wholly different people in France—the mass of the citizens, pure, simple, loving justice, and friendly to liberty; that mass which has conquered its enemies within, and shaken the throne of tyrants: the other is an aggregation of rascals and intriguers, of aristocrats and charlatans, who would convert power and instruction to no other purpose but their own aggrandisement. As long as that impure race exists, the condition of the Republic will be unhappy and precarious. Let them reign for a day, and the country is lost. It is for you to deliver yourselves from them by imposing energy and unchangeable concert. In saying these words, I am perhaps sharpening poniards against myself, and it is for that very reason that I pronounce them. You will persevere in your principles and your triumphant march; you will stifle crime and save your country. I have lived enough. I have seen the French people start from the depth of servitude and debasement to the summit of glory and of republican virtue. I have seen their fetters broken, and the guilty thrones which oppressed the earth shaken by their triumphant arms. I have seen—more marvellous still—a prodigy which the corruptions of the monarchy, and the inexperience of the first periods of the Revolution, could hardly have permitted us to hope—an

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and widows. For these classes it was calculated that there would be required in all the departments—

	Francs.	
For the first,	7,144,000 or £285,760 a-year.	
For the second,	2,040,000 ...	81,600 ...
For the third,	3,060,000 ...	122,400 ...
For the sick poor in their own houses,	160,000 ...	6,400 ...
	12,404,000 ...	496,160 ...

The sum allotted to each pauper receiving public aid was to be ten sous (4d.) a-day for each adult, and six sous a-day (2½d.) for each child under ten years of age. The whole relief was to be given in the houses of the poor; and it was calculated that, in the first instance, the number of families in health receiving succour would be 106,000, or 425,000 individuals, and the sick 21,000. There can be no doubt that these numbers were below what would have been required: but these enactments contain the principles of all right legislation on the subject.—See *Histoire Parlementaire de la Révolution*, xxxiii. 37, 68.

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assembly invested with the power of the French nation, marching with a firm and rapid step towards the completion of the public happiness—devoted to the people, and to the triumph of equality, worthy of giving to the world the signal of liberty and the example of every virtue. Complete, then, citizens, your sublime work ! You have placed yourselves in the front rank, to sustain the first assault of the enemies of humanity. We will deserve that honour, and we will trace with our blood the path to immortality. May you ever display that unalterable energy, which is required to enable you to resist the monsters of the universe combined against you, and enjoy in peace the fruits of your virtues and the blessings of the people !”¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxiii. 132,
133.

39.
Prodigious
and increas-
ing issue of
assignats.

But in the midst of these warm anticipations and eloquent declamations, the finances of the Republic were daily falling into a more deplorable condition, and its prodigious expenditure, external and internal, was sustained only by a ceaseless and constantly increasing issue of assignats. By a report of Cambon, the minister of finance, on 16th May 1794, it appeared that the assignats which had been created up to that period amounted to the enormous sum of 8,778,000,000 francs (£351,120,000 sterling) ; of which number there still remained in circulation 5,898,000,000 francs, or £235,920,000. So immense a mass of paper, amounting at the very lowest estimate to three times the whole present circulation of either France or England, taking both specie and bank-notes into view, of course could not exist in circulation without producing a depreciation in its value to a ruinous extent ; the more especially as the whole transactions between man and man in the country were at a stand, in consequence of the blasting operation of the law of the maximum ; and foreign commerce, equally with domestic expenditure, was annihilated. But as the assignats bore a forced circulation, and the refusal to take them at par would probably lead to a denunciation at the nearest revolutionary committee,² there was no alternative but to shun the pestilence as

² Rapport
de Cambon,
16 Mai.
Moniteur,
18 Mai, p.
973.

much as possible, and avoid either selling anything, or engaging in any transaction whatever in which money was employed. But creditors could not do this, and fraudulent debtors gladly bought up assignats, and forced a discharge of their debts for a fiftieth or hundredth part of their real value.

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While the assignats were thus sweeping away the whole capital of the state, the march of the Revolution was equally devastating and relentless in the destruction of human life. The proceedings of the Revolutionary Tribunal, after the law of 22d Prairial had passed, were so brief as hardly to deserve the name of a trial ; while the columns of the *Moniteur* of the following day exhibited fatal proof, that to be arraigned before that tribunal, and sent to the guillotine, were in general the same thing.* Bands of thirty, forty, and fifty persons, were successively brought up, often two sets in a day, composed of men and women, old, middle-aged, and young, generally wholly unconnected with each other, and who never knew of each other's existence till they heard each other's names in one accusation. Royalists, Dantonists, Anarchists, and Constitutionalists, were all huddled together in one indictment, under a charge of " conspiracy against the Republic ;" and that fatal word was sufficient to warrant proceeding for life and death against a crowd of men and women, total strangers to each other, but who had all, from some ground or other, awakened the jealousy of the Decemvirs.

40.
Increased
executions
by the Re-
volutionary
Tribunal.

* A curious proof of this extraordinary rapidity came out subsequently on the trial of Fouquier Tinville. Wolf, one of the clerks of the Revolutionary Tribunal, being asked how it happened that some persons had been executed whose sentences had not even been signed, gave the following answer:—" No criminal could be executed without a certificate of the sentence from the principal clerk of court, and the clerk, for his own safety, would not give the certificate till he had the sentence signed by the judge. But the time being too short for copying out these judgments the same day, the clerk obtained the judge's signature to a form, which he could fill up each day at his leisure, and in the mean time he ran no risk in giving the requisite certificate. But in this instance, where the sentence produced is still blank, Legris, the clerk who wrote it, was himself arrested at five o'clock next morning, and executed at four o'clock in the afternoon."—*Procès de FOUQUIER TINVILLE, Bull. du Trib. Rév. No. 22.*

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The slightest symptom of disapprobation at the existing regime—a word, a look, a gesture, a sigh, a tear, were sufficient, if deposed to by the most infamous witness, to secure an immediate condemnation ; and upon a charge of conspiracy with others whose principles and connections were diametrically opposed to theirs, thus included with them in the same doom. In this way crowds of Royalists and Anarchists were sent to the scaffold together, because the one had been connected with those who blamed the Revolution for going too far, the other for not going far enough. Even a declaration by women that they were pregnant often failed in procuring so much as a temporary suspension of their fate.* A deplorable *equality* was observed between the number of persons indicted one day before the Revolutionary Tribunal, and that which appeared next day in the columns of the *Moniteur* as having perished on the scaffold.† And so generally was

* “I saw,” said Wolf, a clerk of the Revolutionary Tribunal, “at least ten or twelve women executed the day they had declared themselves pregnant. Their cases were, indeed, referred to the medical men ; but on their declining, through terror, to speak decidedly, they were all executed.”—*Réponse de WOLF ; Procès de FOUQUIER TINVILLE*, No. 22.

† The following were the numbers daily executed in Paris during the latter period of the Reign of Terror :—

					Executed.
17	Prairial or	5 June 1794,	...	...	25
18	—	6 —	...	...	26
19	—	7 —	...	...	27
20	—	8 —	...	...	26
21	—	9 —	...	...	23
22	—	10 —	...	...	18
23	—	11 —	...	...	27
24	—	12 —	...	...	25
25	—	13 —	...	...	30
26	—	14 —	...	...	43
27	—	15 —	...	...	33
28	—	16 —	...	...	41
29	—	17 —	...	...	56
1	Messidor	19 —	...	...	29
2	—	20 —	...	...	37
3	—	21 —	...	...	48
4	—	22 —	...	...	27
5	—	23 —	...	...	31
6	—	24 —	...	...	52
7	—	25 —	...	...	47
8	—	26 —	...	...	51

the danger of expressing sympathy with the victims understood, that no tears were shed, nor did mournful visages appear even in the streets when the melancholy procession proceeded along, conveying them to the scaffold ; and if a dead body was seen on the wayside, the traveller, as in the days recorded by Tacitus, averted his eyes lest he should be seen to shudder, and denounced at the Jacobin Committee as a counter-revolutionist.¹

The trial of these unhappy captives was as brief as during the massacres in the prisons. “Did you know of the conspiracy of the prisons, Dorival ?” “No.”—“I expected no other answer ; but it will not avail you.” To another—“Are not you an ex-noble ?” “Yes.” To a third—“Are you not a priest ?” “Yes, but I have taken the oath.” “You have no right to speak ; be silent.”—

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¹ Deux
Amis, xii.
328, 329.
Duval
Souv. de la
Terreur, iv.
368, 372.

41.
Excessive
brevity of
the trials.

					Executed.
9 Messidor	27 June 1794,	...	...	...	30
11 —	29 —	...	...	...	32
12 —	30 —	...	...	...	31
13 —	1 July,	...	...	...	33
14 —	2 —	...	...	...	37
15 —	3 —	...	...	...	31
16 —	4 —	...	...	...	33
17 —	5 —	...	...	...	31
18 —	6 —	...	...	...	30
19 —	7 —	...	...	...	76
21 —	9 —	...	...	...	78
22 —	10 —	...	...	...	81
23 —	11 —	...	...	...	29
24 —	12 —	...	...	...	32
25 —	13 —	...	...	...	53
27 —	15 —	...	...	...	49
28 —	16 —	...	...	...	48
29 —	17 —	...	...	...	49
1 Thermidor, or	19 —	...	...	...	51
2 —	20 —	...	...	...	47
3 —	21 —	...	...	...	52
4 —	22 —	...	...	...	54
5 —	23 —	...	...	...	74
6 —	24 —	...	...	...	43
7 —	25 —	...	...	...	47
8 —	26 —	...	...	...	55
9 —	27 — Robespierre's fall,	...	...	...	49
10 —	28 — With Robespierre,	...	...	...	27
11 —	29 — Robespierre's party,	73

—Compiled from the *Moniteur* of the above dates, a few days after each.

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“Were not you architect to Madame?” “Yes, but I was disgraced in 1788.”—“Had you not a father-in-law in the Luxembourg?” “Yes.” Such were the questions which constituted the sole trial of the numerous accused; often no witnesses were called; their condemnations were pronounced almost as rapidly as their names were read out; the law of 22d Prairial had dispensed with the necessity of taking any evidence when the court were convinced by moral presumptions. The indictments were thrown off by hundreds at once, and the name of the individual merely filled in; the judgments were printed with equal rapidity, in a room adjoining the court; and several thousand copies circulated through Paris by little urchins, exclaiming, amidst weeping and distracted crowds—“Here are the names of those who have gained prizes in the lottery of the holy guillotine!” The accused were executed soon after leaving the court, or at latest on the following afternoon.¹

¹ Procès de Fouquier Tinville, Bull. du Trib. Rév. p. 54, 57. Tableau des Prisons, xi. 98. Th. vi. 366, 367. Deux Amis, xii.

42.
Executions still further increased.

Since the law of the 22d Prairial had been passed, the heads had fallen at the rate of thirty or forty a-day. “This is well,” said Fouquier Tinville; “but we must get on more rapidly in the next decade; four hundred and fifty is the very least that must then be served up.” To facilitate this immense increase, spies were sent into the prisons in order to extract from the unhappy wretches their secrets, and designate to the public accuser those who might first be selected. These infamous wretches soon became the terror of the captives. They were enclosed as suspected persons; but their real mission was soon apparent from their insolence, their consequential airs, the preference shown them by the jailers, and their orgies at the doors of the cells with the agents of the police. As they were sent there to get up a fresh conspiracy in the prisons, they were not long of accomplishing their purpose. A hundred and seventy were denounced at the Luxembourg alone. The spies, whose mission was soon discovered, were caressed, implored by the trembling prisoners, and received what-

ever little sums they had been able to secrete about their persons, to keep their names out of the black list ; but in vain.* The names of such as they chose to denounce were made up in a list, called in the prisons "The Evening Journal," and the public chariots were sent at nightfall to convey them to the Conciergerie, preparatory to their trial on the following morning. When the unfortunate captives heard the rolling of the wheels of the cars which were sent to convey them, the most agonising suspense prevailed in the prisons. They flocked to the wickets of their corridors, placed their ears on the bars to hear the list, and trembled lest their names should be called out by the officers. Those who were named embraced their companions in misfortune, and received their last adieus : often the most heart-rending separations were witnessed ; a father tore himself from the arms of his children, a husband from his shrieking wife. Such as survived had reason to envy the lot of those conducted to the den of Fouquier Tinville ; restored to their cells, they remained in a state of suspense worse than death itself till the same hour on the following night, when the rolling of the chariot-wheels renewed the universal agony of the captives.¹

To such a degree did the torture of suspense prey upon the minds of the prisoners, that they became not only reckless of life, but anxious for death. They realised the terrible peculiarity which Dante describes as the last aggravation of the Infernal Regions—

———"Che è tanto greve

A lor, che lamentar gli fa sì forte ?

Rispose ; Dicolti molto breve.

Questi non hanno speranza di morte."†

* Immense sums of money were given by such of the captives as had succeeded in secreting any to these wretches to procure even a temporary respite from insertion in the fatal lists, nor did they despise the smallest bribes. Sometimes their gratuities were as high as 400 louis; sometimes as low as a bottle of brandy.—*Tableau Historique de la Maison St Lazare*, p. 53.

† "What doth aggrieve them thus,
That they lament so loud ? He straight replied—
That will I tell thee briefly : these of death
No hope may entertain."

CARY'S DANTE, *Inferno*, iii. 43.

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¹ Deux
Amis, xii.
331, 332.
Tableau des
Prisons, ii.
29, 37. Th.
vi. 368, 369.
Hist. de la
Conv. iii.
386, 388.

43.
Agony of
the prison-
ers. Death
of the Prin-
cess of Mon-
aco.

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The inhabitants who had reason to apprehend detention became indifferent to all the precautions requisite to secure their safety ; many who had escaped voluntarily surrendered themselves to their persecutors, or waited, on the high-road, the first band of the national guard to apprehend them. The young Princess of Monaco, in the flower of youth and beauty, after receiving her sentence, declared herself pregnant, and obtained a respite ; the horrors of surviving those she loved, however, so preyed upon her mind, that the next day she retracted her declaration. "Citizens," said she, "I go to death with all the tranquillity which innocence inspires." Soon after, turning to the jailer who accompanied her, she gave him a packet, containing a lock of her beautiful hair, and said—"I have only one favour to implore of you, that you will give this to my son : promise this as my last and dying request." Then, turning to a young woman near her, recently condemned, she exclaimed—"Courage, my dear friend ! Courage ! Crime alone can show weakness !" She died with sublime devotion, evincing in her last moments, like Madame Roland and Charlotte Corday, a serenity rarely witnessed in the other sex.¹

¹ Tableau des Prisons, ii. 39, 40. Deux Amis, xii. 329, 330. Lac. ii. 164, 166.

44.
Heroic devotion of several prisoners.

Madame Lavergne had hoped that, by her intercession, she would move the hearts of the judges in favour of her husband, the commandant of Longwy. When she saw that all was unavailing, and that sentence of death was pronounced, a cry of *Vive le Roi!* was heard ; all the spectators trembled at the fatal words. "*Vive le Roi!*" exclaimed Madame in more energetic terms ; and when those next her exclaimed that she had lost her reason, she repeated the same words in a calmer voice, so as to leave no room for doubt as to her deliberate intention. She obtained the recompense she desired in dying beside her husband. Soon after a sister followed the same method to avoid surviving her brother, and a young woman, to accompany the object of her affection to another world. Madame de Grammont, disdaining to employ words in her own defence, which she

well knew would be unavailing, protested only the innocence of Mademoiselle du Chatelet, who sat at the bar beside her.* Servants frequently insisted upon accompanying their masters to prison, and perished with them on the scaffold. Many daughters went on their knees to the members of the Revolutionary Committee, to be allowed to join their parents in captivity, and, when brought to trial, pleaded guilty to the same charges. The efforts of the court and jury were unable to make them separate their cases; the tears of their parents even were unavailing: in the generous contention, filial affection prevailed over parental love.† A father and son were confined together in the Maison St Lazare; the latter was involved in one of the fabricated conspiracies of the prison: when his name was called out to stand his trial, his father came forward, and, by personating his son, was the means of saving his life, by dying in his stead. “Do you know,” said the president of the Revolutionary Tribunal to Isabeau, “in whose presence you are standing?”—“Yes,” replied the undaunted young man; “it is here that formerly virtue judged crime, and that now crime murders innocence.” Nearly all the members of the old Parliament of Paris suffered on the scaffold. One of them, M. Legrand d’Alleray, was, with his wife, accused of having corresponded with his emigrant son. Even Fouquier Tinville was softened. “Here,” said he, “is the letter brought to your charge: but I know your writing; it is a forgery.”—“Let me see the paper,” said D’Alleray. “You are mistaken,” said the intrepid old man; “it

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* “I am aware,” said she, “it would be useless to speak about myself; but what has this angel done? (pointing to Madame du Chatelet)—she who never took any part in public strife, who belonged to no party, was involved in no intrigues, but was devoted only to works of conscious benevolence. There are others as innocent; none so little liable to suspicion as she.”—SENAC DE MEILHAN, 147.

† “Oh spettacolo grande, ove a tenzone!
Sono amore e magnanima virtute!
Ove la morte al vincitor si pone
In premio, e’l mal del vinto è la salute.”

Gerusalemme Liberata, ii. 31.

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is both my writing and my signature.”—“Doubtless,” replied Fouquier, still desirous to save him, “you were not acquainted with the law which made it capital to correspond with emigrants?”—“You are mistaken again,” said D’Alleray; “I knew of that law; but I knew also of another, prior and superior, which commands parents to sacrifice their lives for their children.” Still Fouquier Tinville tried to furnish him with excuses; but the old man constantly eluded them; and at length said—“I see your object, and thank you for it; but my wife and I will not purchase life by falsehood: better to die at once. We have grown old together, without having ever told a falsehood; we will not begin when on the verge of the grave. Do your duty; we shall do ours. We blame you not; the fault is that of the law.” They were sent to the scaffold.¹

¹ Lac. ii.
164, 166.
Deux Amis,
xii. 331, 337.
Tableau des
Prisons, ii.
31, 45.

45.
Lavoisier,
Roucher,
and others.

The vengeance of the tyrants fell with peculiar severity upon all whose talents or descent distinguished them from the rest of mankind. The son of Buffon, the daughter of Vernet, perished without regard to the illustrious names they bore. When the former was brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal, on the charge of being implicated in the conspiracy in the Luxembourg, he said—“I was confined in the St Lazare, and could not have conspired in the Luxembourg.” “No matter,” said Fouquier Tinville, “you have conspired *somewhere* ;” and he was executed with the prisoners from the Luxembourg. On being placed on the scaffold, he said, “I am the son of Buffon,” and presented his arms to be bound. Florian, the eloquent novelist, pleaded in vain, in a touching petition from prison, that his life had been devoted to the service of mankind, that he had been threatened with the Bastille for some of his productions, and that the hand which had drawn the romance of William Tell, and depicted a paternal government under Numa, could not be suspected of a leaning to despotism. He was not executed, as the fall of Robespierre prevented it; but he was so

horror-struck with the scenes he had witnessed in prison, that he died after the hour of deliverance had arrived. Lavoisier was cut off in the midst of his profound chemical researches ; he pleaded in vain for a respite to complete a scientific discovery. Almost all the members of the French Academy were in jail, in hourly expectation of their fate. Roucher, an amiable poet, a few hours before his death, sent his miniature to his children, accompanied by these touching lines :—

“ Ne vous étonnez pas, objets charmans et doux,
Si quelque air de tristesse obscurcit mon visage ;
Lorsqu’un crayon savant dessinait mon image,
J’attendais l’échafaud et je songeais à vous.”

André Chénier, a young man, whose eloquent writings pointed him out as the future historian of the Revolution, and Chamfort, one of its earliest and ablest supporters, were executed at the same time. The former was engaged, immediately before his execution, in composing some pathetic stanzas, addressed to Mademoiselle de Coigny, for whom he had conceived a romantic attachment in prison, among which is to be found the following :—

“ Peut-être avant que l’heure en cercle proménée
Ait posé sur l’émail brillant,
Dans les soixante pas où sa route est bornée,
Son pied sonore et vigilant,
Le sommeil du tombeau pressera mes paupières ”——

At this unfinished stanza the poet was summoned to the guillotine. His brother Joseph, who had the power to save his life, refused to do so—even to the tears of their common parent, prostrate before him. Literary jealousy steeled the young revolutionist against the first feelings of nature. Roucher and André Chénier were seated together in the chariot, and discoursed there, like Cato, on the immortality of the soul. Chénier, when on the scaffold, struck his head against one of the beams of the guillotine, exclaiming, “ ’Tis a pity ! there was something there.”¹ A few weeks longer would have swept off

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¹ Vie de Florian, Œuvres, i. 181, 183. Lac. xi. 48, 49, and Pr. Hist. ii. 166, 167. Th. vi. 428. Lam. Hist. des Gir. viii. 121, 134, 143. D’Israeli, Lit. Char. ch. 15, p. 236. Deux Amis, xii. 332, 333.

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the whole literary talent as well as dignified names of France. In a single night three hundred families of the Faubourg St Germain were thrown into prison. Their only crimes were the historic names which they bore, embracing all that was illustrious in the military, parliamentary, or ecclesiastical history of France. There was no difficulty in finding crimes to charge them with—their names, their rank, their historic celebrity, were sufficient.

46.
Execution
of Male-
sherbes and
his whole
family, with
d'Espré-
ménil.
April 22.

In the midst of the general massacre, Malesherbes, the generous and intrepid defender of Louis XVI., was too immaculate a character to escape destruction. For some time he had lived in the country in the closest retirement ; a young man accused of being an emigrant, concealed in his house, furnished a pretext for the apprehension of the venerable old man and all his family. When he arrived at the prison, all the captives rose up and crowded round him : they brought him a seat. "I thank you," said he, "for the attention you pay to my age ; but I perceive one amongst you feebler than myself—give it to him." He was brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal along with his whole family : even the judges of that sanguinary court turned aside their heads to avoid beholding the heart-rending spectacle. They were all condemned together. His daughter, Madame de Rozambo, when preparing to mount the fatal chariot, perceived Mademoiselle Sombreuil, whose heroic devotion had saved her father on the 2d of September, but who had again followed him to prison. Throwing herself into her arms, she exclaimed—"You have had the good fortune to save your father, and I have the glory of dying with mine !" Malesherbes stumbled over a stone as he crossed the court, with his arms bound, to mount the chariot : he said with a smile—"That is a bad omen : a Roman would have turned back." Recollecting, with the malice of demons, the heroic manner in which he had come forward to defend the unhappy Louis, the monsters applied to him the cruel privilege invented

in those days of woe, for such as were esteemed the greatest criminals. He was selected as the *last* victim for execution, and had the agony of seeing his daughter, Madame Rozambo, and grand-daughter, Madame de Châteaubriand, with her husband, guillotined before his eyes, ere death put a period to his sufferings.* When bound to the plank, his grey hairs were observed to be sprinkled with the blood of the children he had seen suffer before him. With him was included in the indictment M. d'Espréménil, so long the idol of the populace of Paris, and who had done so much in its earlier stages to urge on the Revolution. He was condemned and executed with Malesherbes, and evinced the same sublime constancy in his last moments.¹

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¹ Boissy
d'Anglas,
Vie de
Malesher-
bes, ii. 274.
Lac. ii. 147,
157. Biog.
Univ. xxvi.
366, 367.

The next trial of note, and perhaps the most iniquitous of the many iniquitous ones which took place before the Revolutionary Tribunal, was that of the farmers-general of the revenue. The only motive for their prosecution appears to have been the hope of obtaining something considerable from the confiscation of their estates; but the Committee of Public Salvation had much difficulty in finding any charge to prefer against them. On 5th May, Dupin read a long report to the Convention, concluding with a motion, which, like all the others at that period, was unanimously adopted, that all the farmers-general then living should be sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal. Thither they were accordingly brought on the 8th, and at once condemned to be executed. The only thing like a criminal act adduced against them was that of having realised usurious profits, and *mixed water with their tobacco prior to 1776, to make it weigh heavier*. On these charges they were all straightway condemned. When going to the scaffold, it was discovered that in the hurry

47.
Trial of the
Farmers-
general.
May 5.

* " Oh Gioja ! più gran pena che la morte
Dar ti, poss' io ? Saveneti innanzi dunque,
Cadangli, Elettra pria, Pilade poscia ;
Quandi ei sovr' essi cada."—ALFIERI, *Oreste*, Act. iv. scene 4.

—How identical is the infernal spirit of cruelty in all ages !

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three subordinate officers had been sentenced instead of three farmers-general, and twenty-eight only were executed; but the three missing ones were soon after got, all between seventy and eighty years of age, and guillotined without mercy.* Shortly after, the Abbé de Fénélon, grand-nephew of the illustrious prelate of the same name, was led forth to execution. He was eighty-nine years old, and had spent his long life in deeds of beneficence. He went to death surrounded by a crowd of orphan Savoyard children to whom he had acted as a father. Such was his bodily weakness, owing to his great age, that he required to be helped up the steps of the scaffold: but the firmness of his mind was unshaken; and his last request was, that his arms should be unbound, that he might give his last blessing to his numerous *protégés*. The request was granted, and they received the benediction kneeling and in tears around the scaffold.¹

¹ Prudhom.
v. 374.
Procès des
Fermiers-
généraux.
Bull. du
Trib. Rév.
8 Mai.
Moniteur,
Mai 7.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. viii.
128.

48.
Of Madame
Elizabeth.
May 16.

Madame Elizabeth, sister to Louis XVI., was the next victim. When she was brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal, the judges and the jury manifested an unusual degree of impatience for her condemnation. She was brought into court with twenty-four other persons, most of them of high birth or descent. "What has she to complain of?" said Fouquier Tinville, casting his eyes on the illustrious group: "when she sees herself at the foot of the scaffold surrounded by that faithful noblesse, she will believe herself still at Versailles." Like the King and Queen, she manifested the utmost composure and serenity when under examination; her answers, clear, distinct, and perfectly true, left no room for suspicion or misconstruc-

* The sentence was in these terms:—"Qu'il est constant qu'il a existé un complot contre le peuple Français tendant à favoriser de tous les moyens possibles le succès des ennemis de la France, notamment en exerçant toute espèce d'exaction et de concussion sur le peuple Français en mêlant au tabac de l'eau et des ingrédients nuisibles à la santé, en prenant 6 à 10 pour cent."—*Bulletin du Tribunal Révolutionnaire*, 8 Mai 1794. It appears from Dupin's evidence, when afterwards Fouquier Tinville was charged with this iniquity, that their death had previously been arranged by the Committee of Public Salvation.—*Procès de FOUQUIER TINVILLE*; *Bull. du Trib. Rév.; Réponse de Dupin*, p. 2.

tion. Being accused of having succoured some men who had been wounded in the Champs Elysées, on the occasion of the revolt, she replied—"Humanity alone led me to dress their wounds; I needed no inquiry into the origin of their sufferings to feel the obligation to relieve them. I never thought this a merit, but I cannot see how it can be considered as a crime."—"Admit, at least," said the president, "that you have nourished in the young Capet the hope of regaining the throne of his father."—"I devoted myself," said she, "to the care of that infant, who was the more dear to me as he had lost those to whom he owed his being." Being accused of being an accomplice of the tyrant—"If my brother had been a tyrant," she replied, "neither you nor I would have been where we now are." She was sentenced along with many others of illustrious rank and dignified virtue. On being taken to the room where the condemned were assembled, she exhorted them with so much calmness and serenity to die, that they were all encouraged by her example. On the chariot she declared that one of her companions had disclosed to her that she was pregnant, and thus was the means of saving her from destruction. When she had ascended the scaffold, the executioner rudely undid the clasp which closed the veil across her breast. "In the name of modesty," she said to one of the bystanders whose arms were not tied, "cover my bosom."* She embraced all her companions as they successively mounted the scaffold:

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* " 'Ἡ δὲ καὶ θνησκουσ' ὁμῶς
Πολλὴν πρὸνοιαν εἶχεν εὐσχημῶς πεσεῖν
Κρυπτουσ' ἃ κρύπτειν ὀμματ' ἀρσενων χρεῶν."

EURIPIDES, *Hecuba*, 566.

—————"Careful in death,

With decent grace, her robe to enfold,
Veiling what eye of man should ne'er behold."

A similar instance of heroic virtue in death occurred in a female martyr in the early Christian church. Perpetua and Felicitas, both Christians, were sentenced, in the year 203, to be killed by wild cattle at Carthage. They were both attacked, accordingly, by furious bulls, who tossed them on their horns. So violent was the shock, that Perpetua fell on the ground stunned; but, partially

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¹ Deux
Amis, xii.
287, 293.
Duchesse
d'Angou-
lême, Mém.
Sup. à la
Rév. iv. 292.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. viii.
145, 146.

she herself, according to the usual custom of the period, being selected to suffer last. She died with the serenity of an angel, praying for those who had taken her life. The beauty of her form, and the placidity of her expression, awakened sentiments of commiseration even among the most savage of the revolutionary spectators. With her was executed Madame de Montmorin—the same who, when the States-general walked in procession to church on May 4, 1789, expressed to Madame de Stael her distrust in the unbounded hopes of felicity to France which the latter anticipated from the Revolution.¹*

49.
Of Custine's
son, Luck-
ner, Biron,
Dietrich and
Madame Du
Barri.

Custine, son of the celebrated general of the same name, was executed for having let fall some expressions of attachment to his father; Alexander Beauharnais, for having failed to raise the siege of Mayence. The former had been offered, the night before his execution, the certain means of escape; he refused to make use of them, as his doing so would have endangered the life of the daughter of his jailer, who had generously been instrumental in arranging the plan for his delivery. Thirty thousand francs had bribed the jailer; the carriage was ready; his weeping wife threw herself at his feet, conjuring him to make use of these means of escape; but he resolutely refused, lest he should endanger those who had perilled all in his behalf, and was carried off to the scaffold, while Madame Custine lay insensible on the floor of his cell. The letter of Beauharnais, the night before his execution, was couched in the most touching strains of eloquence. Mar-

recovering her senses, she was seen gathering her torn clothes about her, so as to conceal her limbs, and after tying her hair, she helped Felicitas to rise, who had been severely wounded; and, standing together, they calmly awaited another attack. The people, struck by their heroism, called out that they should be sent to the place where those not killed by the wild beasts were despatched by the "Confectorii," which was accordingly done.—*Vide* ST AUGUSTIN, *Sermons*, 283—294; TERTULLIAN, *de Anima*, c. 55; TILLEMONT, *Annales de l'Empire*, t. iii. p. 213. How interesting to find the noble conceptions of female virtue formed by the Greek poet, successively realised by the Christian martyr in the third, and the royal victim in the eighteenth century!

* *Ante*, chap. iv. § 4. Her husband had been murdered during the massacres in the prisons on September 2.

shal Luckner, whom the Jacobins had so long represented as the destined saviour of France ; General Biron, whose amiable qualities, notwithstanding the profligacy of his character, had long endeared him to society ; General Lamarlière, whose successful war of posts had so long covered the northern frontier, and many other distinguished warriors, were sent to the scaffold. All showed the same heroism in their last moments ; but not greater than was displayed by pacific citizens and young women, who had been totally unaccustomed to face danger. It was in the class of nobles that the greatest courage was shown : they firmly protested their devotion to their God and their king, and their readiness to die in their service. The priests died like worthy martyrs of their faith, bestowing, to their last moments, the succours of religion on the captives about to suffer, with whom they were surrounded. Many of the peasants and poorer classes piteously bewailed their fate in being cut off, they knew not why, and condemned, they knew not with whom. Dietrich, mayor of Strassburg, one of the most ardent friends of liberty, wrote to his son the night before his execution—"As he valued his last blessing, never to attempt to revenge his death." One prisoner alone excited the contempt of the spectators, by raising piteous cries on the chariot, and striving in a frenzy of terror with the executioners on the scaffold : it was Madame du Barri, the associate of the infamous pleasures of Louis XV. She had made her escape to London, but returned to France to disinter her diamonds and jewels, which she had secretly buried under a tree in her park, at Luciennes, near Versailles. She was there betrayed by Zamoro, a black page, on whom she had long lavished the most unbounded kindness. Her cries on the chariot, when going to the scaffold, resounded through the crowd. "Life ! Life !" she exclaimed : "life for repentance and devotion to the Republic." Her fine black hair behind was cut off, but that in front remained ; and she shook

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¹ Russie en
1839, par le
Marquis
Custine, i.
42. Deux
Amis, xii.
91. Duval
Souv. de la
Terreur, iv.
169, 175.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. vii.
277, 278 ;
viii. 114.

her head in the hope of softening the people by the display of her still beautiful ringlets. Some among the bystanders shuddered, others laughed. Instead of answering, the executioner pointed out, smiling, the block on the guillotine on which her head was to rest. When lifted on the scaffold, being unable to stand, she piteously prayed for a minute's respite, and uttered shrieks when bound to the plank which froze every heart with horror. Yet was this lamentable spectacle not without a beneficial effect ; it recalled the people to a sense of the horror of the punishment, which, from the general heroism or resignation of the victims, had come, strange to say, to be almost forgotten.^{1*}

50.
Execution
of the young
women from
Verdun and
Montmar-
tre.

While prostituted beauty was thus evincing a fearful picture of the weakness of splendid guilt in its last moments, the courage with which a number of young women, supported by the recollections of virtue and the influence of religion, underwent the same fate, excited universal astonishment and sympathy. Two cases in particular, at the very close of the Reign of Terror, attracted general notice, and contributed in no small degree to produce a general heart-sickening at the reign of blood. They are thus described by an eyewitness of these melancholy scenes :—"On the 28th of May, fourteen young women of Verdun were brought out for execution together, for no other crime but that of having presented bouquets of flowers to the King of Prussia, when he entered the town in 1792. They were all alike dressed in white, as if they had been going to a marriage. Their youth, their beauty, their innocent air, touched even the

* "C'est dans la classe des nobles, que j'ai vu," says an eyewitness, "le plus de courage : ils vantaient hautement leur attachement inaltérable pour la royauté, et leur dévouement sans bornes pour leur roi ; ils repandaient avec joie leur sang sur l'échafaud pour la cause de la monarchie. Mais ce qui était un objet général d'attendrissement c'était la résignation touchante des ministres de la religion Chrétienne. Ils assistaient dans leur dernier moment les malheureux prisonniers ; ils leur prodiguaient toutes les consolations célestes, et leur faisaient envisager la mort comme l'asile de l'homme juste et persécuté : eux-mêmes donnaient l'exemple de toutes les vertus, et pratiquaient la morale évangélique dans toute sa pureté."—*Tableau des Prisons de Paris pendant la Terreur, par un Témoin Oculaire*, i. 41, 42.

most savage hearts with pity, and many tears were secretly shed at the sight of so many innocent human beings being taken together to the scaffold. It was generally observed, after they had been guillotined, that it was like cutting the spring out of the year. A few days after, the whole nuns of the Abbey of Montmartre, with the lady-abbess at their head, were executed together. They began to chant the *Salve Regina* as they left the doors of the Conciergerie, and continued singing during their whole passage along the streets ; and the mournful strain had not ceased, though they were eighteen in number, till the head of the last had fallen under the guillotine. Their constancy, piety, and resignation produced a profound impression on the multitude, long unaccustomed to impressions of that description, and for once silenced the furies of the guillotine,* who usually danced round the loaded chariots, singing revolutionary songs, from the time they left the doors of the Conciergerie till they reached the scaffold in the Place de la Revolution. It was chiefly in consequence of the mournful impression produced by this execution, that the place of punishment was removed, first to the Place St Antoine on the 2d June, and on the 7th to the Barrière du Trône, in the Faubourg St Antoine." The furies of the guillotine, paid for their insults, at an early hour stationed themselves round the chariots which awaited the victims in the court of the Palace of Justice, while the executioners were drinking in the neighbouring wine-shops ; and, when the prisoners were seated, danced round them without ceasing, mocking their sufferings, till they reached the scaffold.¹

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June 1.

¹ Duval, Souv. de la Terreur, iv. 376, 377. Lam. Hist. des Gir. viii. 105.

Dreadful as were these scenes at Paris, the ebullitions of revolutionary revenge were, if possible, more strongly marked in the provinces than even in the metropolis. A full account of these atrocities would fill many volumes ; but a few details, in addition to those contained in the

51. Cruelties in the provinces. Le-bon at Arras.

* "Les lécheuses de la guillotine," alluding to their passion for licking up blood which fell from the scaffold.

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former chapters, may serve as an example of the rest. The disturbances on the northern frontier led to the special mission of a monster named Lebon to those districts, armed with the full power of the Revolutionary Government. His appearance in these departments could be compared to nothing but the apparition of those hideous furies so much the object of dread in the times of paganism. In the city of Arras, above two thousand persons, brought there from the neighbouring departments, perished by the guillotine. To add to the tortures of his victim, Lebon kept a man in suspense for a quarter of an hour under the blade of the guillotine, in order to augment the bitterness of death by reading, before it fell, a letter which he knew would distress him. He did the same with two young English women, who, under pretence of being aristocrats, had been sent to the scaffold. "It is well," said he, "that the aristocrats like you should hear, in their last moments, the triumph of our armies." "Monster," said one of the English ladies, Miss Plunkett, "you think to increase the bitterness of death; but undeceive yourself: though women, we can die courageously; and you will die the death of a coward." Yet even these atrocities were palliated in the Convention, when the people of the north implored an investigation into them. "The proceedings of Lebon," said Barère, "may have been a little *harsh as to form*; but these charges have been suggested by wily aristocrats. The man who crushes the enemies of the people can never be a proper object of censure. What is not permitted to the hatred of a republican against aristocracy? How many generous sentiments atone for seeming harshness in the prosecution of the public enemies! Revolutionary measures are ever to be spoken of with respect." The Convention passed to the order of the day. It is no wonder they did so; for it appears, from a letter of the Committee of Public Salvation still extant, that his proceedings were expressly enjoined by them-

selves.* Mingling treachery and seduction with sanguinary oppression, this monster in the human form turned the despotic powers with which he was invested into the means of individual gratification. After having disgraced the wife of a nobleman, who yielded to his embraces in order to save her husband's life, he put the man to death before the eyes of his devoted consort; a species of treachery so common, says Prudhomme, that the examples of it were innumerable. Children whom he had corrupted were employed by him as spies upon their parents; and so infectious did the cruel example become, that the favourite amusement of this little band was putting to death birds and small animals, with little guillotines made for their use.¹†

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¹ Th. vi. 376, 377. Prudhom. Vic-
times de la
Révolution,
iv. 274.
Châteaub.
Etud. Hist.
i. 102. Pré-
face. Moni-
teur, 4
Juin. Lam.
Hist. des
Gir. vii. 330.

The career of Carrier at Nantes, where the popular

* "Le Comité, citoyen collègue, vous fait observer qu'investi de pouvoirs illimités vous devez prendre dans votre énergie toutes les mesures commandées par le salut de la chose publique. Continuez votre attitude révolutionnaire. Vos pouvoirs sont illimités. Prenez dans votre énergie toutes les mesures commandées par le salut de la République. L'amnestie prononcée lors de la constitution Capétienne (celle de 1791), et invoquée par tous les scélérats, est un crime qui ne peut en couvrir d'autres; les forfaits contre la République ne se rachètent que sous le glaive. Le tyran l'invoqua—le tyran fut frappé. Secouez sur les traîtres le flambeau et le glaive; marchez, citoyen collègue, dans cette ligne révolutionnaire que vous décrivez avec courage; le Comité applaudit à vos travaux."—Signé, BARÈRE, BILLAUD VARENNES, CARNOT; *Paris*, 27 jour du neuvième mois, l'an 2 de la République (18th Oct. 1793). *Histoire de la Convention*, iii. 207.

† This monster was very amorous in his disposition, and mingled lechery with his cruelties. "Il ne caressait sa femme ou sa maitresse qu'il ne dit pas en même temps, 'Cette belle tête sera pourtant coupée dès que j'aurai commandé.'" . . . "Lebon est revenu de Paris: tout de suite, un *jury terrible* à l'instar de celui de Paris a été adopté au Tribunal Révolutionnaire. Un arrêté vigoureux a fait claquemurer les femmes aristocrates dont les maris sont incarcérés et les maris dont les femmes le sont. Une perquisition vient d'être faite par une *commission ardente* de sept patriotes (j'étais du nombre). La guillotine depuis ce temps *ne désespère pas*; les ducs, les marquis, les comtes, les barons, *males et femelles, tombent comme grêle*."—DARTHE à ROBESPIERRE, No. 83.—*Pap. trouv. chez. ROBESPIERRE*; and *Rap. de COURTOIS*, *Ibid.* i. 75.

It is a curious fact, highly illustrative of the progress of revolutions, that this monster in human form was at first humane and inoffensive in his government, and that it was not till he had received reiterated orders from Robespierre, with a hint of a dungeon in case of refusal, that his atrocities commenced. Let no man, if he is not conscious of the utmost firmness of mind, be sure that he would not, in similar circumstances, have done the same.—DUCHESSÉ D'ABRANTÈS, vii. 213, 214.

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52.

Carrier at
Nantes.

vengeance was to be inflicted on the Royalists of the western provinces, was still more relentless.* One of the depots for the prisoners contained fifteen hundred women and children, who, without either beds or straw, were huddled together on the damp floor, and often kept two days without food. The men purchased their lives only by bribery, the women by prostitution. Such as withstood the advances of their oppressors were sent without mercy to the scaffold : the children, who had neither money nor pleasure to offer, were all sacrificed. Repeated fusillades cut them down. Five hundred of these innocents of both sexes, the eldest of whom was not fourteen years old, were on one occasion led out to the same spot to be shot. Never was so deplorable a spectacle witnessed. The littleness of their stature caused most of the bullets, at the first discharge, to fly over their heads ; they broke their bonds, rushed into the ranks of the executioners, clung round their knees, and, with supplicating hands and agonised looks, sought for mercy. Nothing could soften these assassins ; they put them to death even when lying at their feet.† A large party of women, most of whom were with child, and many with babes at their breast, were put on board the boats in the Loire. The innocent caresses, the unconscious smiles of these little innocents, filled their mothers' breasts with inexpressible anguish ; they fondly pressed them to their bosoms, weeping over them for the last time. One of them was delivered of an infant on the quay ; hardly were the agonies of childbed

* "Tout sans exception est incendié, massacré, dévasté ; des villes, des bourgs, des villages, habités par des patriotes, ont disparu, et le fer a acheté ce que la flamme épargnait. C'est ainsi qu'on a resuscité La Vendée."—*Rapport de JULIEN fils à ROBESPIERRE*, 30 Ventôse 1794 ; *Papiers Inédits trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, No. 83.

† "Quis fuit ille dies, Marius quo mœnia victor
Corripuit ? Quantoque gradu mors sæva cucurrit ?
Nobilitas cum plebe perit ; lateque vagatur
Ensis ; et a nullo revocatum est pectore ferrum :
Stat cruor in templis ; multaque rubentia cæde
Lubrica saxa madent. Nulli sua profuit ætas.
Non senis extremum piguit, vergentibus annis,
Præcipitasse diem ; nec, primo in limine vitæ,

over, when she was pushed, with the new-born innocent, into the galley. After being stripped naked, their hands were tied behind their backs ; their shrieks and lamentations were answered by strokes of the sabre ; and while struggling betwixt terror and shame to conceal their nudity from the gaze of the executioners, the signal was given, the planks cut, and the shrieking victims buried in the waves. Carrier himself had a vessel elegantly fitted up, which plied on the Loire, and in which, surrounded by a number of friends and courtesans, he enjoyed the spectacle of the sufferings of the Royalists. Female jealousy added to the zest of the abandoned ministers of his pleasures ; they enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing their rivals destroyed. The shrieks of some hundred victims precipitated into the waves did not interrupt for more than a minute or two the revels in this floating palace of wine and licentiousness. Human cruelty, it would be supposed, could hardly go beyond these executions ; but they were surpassed by Lebon* at Bordeaux. A woman was accused of having wept at the execution of her husband ; she was condemned, amidst the applauses of the multitude, to sit several hours under the suspended blade, which shed upon her, drop by drop, the blood of the deceased, whose corpse was above her, on the scaffold, before she was released by death from her agony.^{1†}

¹ Prudhom.
v. 27. Châteaub.
Etud. Hist. i. 102.
Louvot, 123.
Lam. Hist. des Gir. vii.
321, 323.

One of the most extraordinary features of these terrible

Infantis miseri nascentia rumpere fata.
Crimine quo parvi cædem potuere mereri ?
Sed satis est, jam posse mori—trahit ipse furoris
Impetus ; et visum lenti, quæsisse nocentem."

LUCAN, *Pharsalia*, ii. 99.

* Son of the Lebon at Arras.

† The principle of the commissaries at Bordeaux was to destroy the mercantile aristocracy. " Il faut tuer l'aristocratie mercantile comme on a tué celle des prêtres et des nobles. Les commissaires frappent à coup sûr ; ils ne font grâce à personne ; parcequ'ils sont convaincus que si les aristocrates n'ont pas pris une part active dans les conspirations, ils n'ont pas moins appelé la contre-révolution dans leur cœur." — *Papiers Inédits trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE* ; DAILLET, No. 84 ; BAISSART, No. 85 ; and *Rapport de COURTOIS*, i. 75, 76.

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53.

General
apathy of
the class of
proprietors.
St Just at
Strassburg,
and Tallien
at Bordeaux.

times, was the apathy which the better classes, both in Paris and the provinces, evinced, and the universal disposition to bury anxiety in the delirium of present enjoyment. The people who escaped death went to the operas without intermission, with equal unconcern whether thirty or a hundred heads had fallen during the day. The class of proprietors at Bordeaux, Marseilles, and all the principal towns, timid and vacillating, could not be prevailed on to quit their hearths; while the Jacobins, ardent, reckless, and indefatigable, inured to crime, plunged a merciless sword into the bosom of the country. The soldiers everywhere supported their tyranny: the prospect of ransacking cellars, ravishing women, and plundering coffers, made them universally faithful to the government. St Just, when sent down by Robespierre to Strassburg, wrote to him that the excess of cruelty had blunted men to its effects.* The career of Tallien at Bordeaux at first was equally sanguinary; in a short time seven hundred victims perished on the scaffold. But he was at length awakened to more humane feelings by the influence of his beautiful mistress, whom he afterwards married, Madame de Fontenay, one of those singular characters whom the Revolution raised to eminence, and who had the virtue to apply the influence which her personal charms gave her to the purposes of humanity.¹† “When in a country which we all conceived to be on the point of regeneration,” says

¹ Louvet, 124, 125. Mercier's Tab. de Paris, iv. 372. Lam. Hist. des Gir. viii. 343, 344.

* “L'usage de la Terreur a *blasé le crime* comme les fortes liqueurs blasent le palis. Sans doute, il n'est pas temps encore de faire le bien : le bien particulier que l'on fait n'est qu'un palliatif. Il faut attendre un mal général assez grand pour que l'opinion éprouve une réaction.” — ST JUST à ROBESPIERRE, April 14, 1794; LAMARTINE, vii. 343.

† Madame de Fontenay, whose humanity, not less than her beauty, renders her deserving a place in the portrait-gallery of the Revolution, was the daughter of the Count of Cabarus, a Frenchman by descent, but who had long been established in Spain, and was born at Madrid in 1784. Her mother was a Valencian lady whom Cabarus had seduced. She united in her person and character the beauty and fire of the sunny province where her mother first drew breath, with the grace and spirit of coquetry of that where her father was born. Like Cleopatra or Theodora, she seemed born to rule the world by subduing its conquerors. The enthusiasm of the Revolution soon drew her from Spain to

Louvet, "the men of property were everywhere so timid, and the wicked so audacious, it became evident that all assemblages of men, once dignified with the name of the people by such fools as myself, are, in truth, nothing more than an imbecile herd, too happy to be permitted to crouch under the yoke of a despotic master."

The Committee of Public Salvation incessantly urged Fouquier Tinville, the public accuser, to accelerate the executions. He himself declared, on his subsequent trial, "That on one occasion they ordered him to increase them to one hundred and fifty a-day, and that the proposal filled his mind with such horror, that, as he returned by the Seine, the river appeared to run red with blood, and the pavement on the streets to be strewn with decapitated human heads." The pretended conspiracy in the prisons served as an excuse for a frightful multiplication in the number of victims. One hundred and sixty were denounced in the prison of the Luxembourg alone, and from one to two hundred in the other prisons of Paris. A fabricated attempt at escape in the prison of La Force, was made the ground for sending several hundreds to the Revolutionary Tribunal. Fouquier Tinville had made such an enlargement of the hall of that dreaded court, that room was afforded for one hundred and sixty to be tried at once; and he proposed to place at the bar the whole prisoners charged with the conspiracy in the Luxembourg at one sitting.¹

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XV.

1794.

54.

Efforts of
the Com-
mittee of
Public Sal-
vation to
increase the
massacres.

¹ Deux
Amis, xii.
365, 374.
Th. vi. 363,
364. Lac. ii.
161. Hist.
de la Conv.
iii. 386, 388.
Duval,
Souv. de la
Terreur, iv.
381.

Bordeaux, where she soon attracted general notice by the brilliancy of her dress, her dazzling beauty, and the vehemence with which, like Théroigne de Méricourt at Paris, she espoused the cause of the Revolution. Dressed as an Amazon, with her dark locks surmounted by a tricolor plume, she was to be seen at the clubs, the theatres, and on horseback in the streets, where she pronounced several eloquent speeches in favour of the Revolution. But, unlike Théroigne, she had a heart. Suffering never failed to melt her; and when she acquired an influence over Tallien, which she did the moment he arrived as one of the Commissioners of the Convention at Bordeaux, she exerted it entirely to save victims from the vengeance of the Republicans. Her influence soon after had no small share in bringing about the 9th Thermidor and fall of Robespierre, in which Tallien bore so prominent a part.—
LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, vii. 333, 334.

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1794.

He even went so far as to erect a guillotine in the court-room, in order to execute the prisoners the moment the sentence was pronounced : but Collot d'Herbois objected to this, as tending "to demoralise punishment." A guillotine had been prepared, however, with four blades placed crossways, which could behead four prisoners at once.

55.

Horror at
length ex-
cited by the
number and
descent of
the execu-
tions.

June 2.

June 7.

But there is a limit to human suffering, an hour when indignant nature will no longer submit, and courage arises out of despair. That avenging hour was fast approaching. The lengthened files of prisoners daily led to the scaffold, had long excited the commiseration of the better classes in Paris ; the shops in the Rue St Honoré were shut, and its pavement deserted, when the melancholy procession, moving towards the Place de la Révolution, passed along. Alarmed at these signs of dissatisfaction, the Committee changed, as already mentioned, the place of execution, and fixed it first on the Place St Antoine, and soon after at the Barrière du Trône, in the Faubourg St Antoine. But even the workmen of that revolutionary district ere long manifested impatience at the constant repetition of the dismal spectacle. The middle classes, who constituted the strength of the national guard in Paris, began to be alarmed at the rapid progress and *evident descent* of the proscriptions. At first the nobles and ecclesiastics only were included ; by degrees the whole landed proprietors were reached : but now the work of destruction seemed to be fast approaching every class above the lowest. On the lists of the Revolutionary Tribunal, in the latter days of the Reign of Terror, are to be found tailors, shoemakers, hairdressers, butchers, farmers, mechanics, and workmen, accused of anti-revolutionary principles. From the 10th June to the 17th July, that court had sentenced twelve hundred and eighty-five persons to death. The people felt pity for these proscriptions, not only from their frequency, but their

near approach to themselves. Their reason was at length awakened by the revolutionary fever having exhausted itself; humanity began to react against the ceaseless effusion of human blood, after all their enemies had been destroyed. It was impossible that pity should not at length be awakened in the breast of the spectators, for never had such scenes of woe been exhibited to the public gaze. "The funeral cars," says the republican historian, Lamartine, "often held together the husband, wife, and all their children. Their imploring visages, which mutually regarded each other with the tender expression of a last look, the heads of daughters falling on the knees of their mothers, of wives on the shoulders of their husbands, the pressure of heart against heart, both of which were so soon to cease to beat—now grey hairs and auburn locks cut by the same scissors, now wrinkled heads and charming visages falling under the same axe; the slow march of the cortège, the monotonous rolling of the wheels, the hedge of sabres around the procession, the stifled sobs of the victims, the hisses of the populace, the cries of the furies of the guillotine—all impressed a mournful character on these assassinations, which seemed to be provided for no other purpose but to serve for the pastime of the people."¹

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¹ *Moniteur*,
June 1 to
July 28.
Deux Amis,
xii. 342.
Lac, xi. 53,
56. *Th. vi.*
370. *Lam.*
Hist. des
Gir. viii.
123.

A considerably party in the Convention eagerly embraced the same sentiments; their conspicuous situation rendered it probable that they would be among the first victims, and every one, in the hope of saving his own life, ardently prayed for the downfall of the tyrants. It was well known in that Assembly that Robespierre had let fall some expressions, indicating an intention to destroy many of its members; and the law of 22d Prairial was regarded as a means of attaining that object. The Committee of Public Salvation was not ignorant of these dispositions. But these expressions of public feeling only inspired the oppressors with greater impatience for human blood. "Let us put," said Vadier, "a wall of

56.
Opinions of
the Conven-
tion on the
subject.

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heads between the people and ourselves.”—“The Revolutionary Tribunal,” exclaimed Billaud Varennes, “thinks it has made a great effort when it strikes off seventy heads a-day ; but the people are easily habituated to what they always behold : to inspire terror, we must double the number.”—“How timid you are in the capital !” said Collot d’Herbois ; “can your ears not stand the sound of artillery ? It is a proof of weakness to execute your enemies one after another ; you should mow them at once down with cannon.” The judges of the Revolutionary Tribunal, many of whom came from the galleys of Toulon, laboured incessantly at the work of extermination, and mingled indecent ribaldry and jests with their unrelenting cruelty to the crowds of captives who were brought before them. An old man, who had lost the use of speech by a paralytic affection, being placed at the bar, the president exclaimed—“No matter ; it is not his tongue but his head that we want.”¹

¹ Deux
Amis, xii.
351, 354.
Lac. xi. 53,
56. Th. vi.
370. Mig.
ii. 327.

57.
Affair of
Catherine
Théot,
which first
shook the
power of
Robes-
pierre.
June 12.

The superstition or vanity of Robespierre furnished the first pretext for a combination to shake his power. The members of the different committees, alarmed for their own safety, were secretly endeavouring to undermine his influence, when the fanaticism of an old woman, named Catherine Théot, gave them the means of extending their apprehensions to a larger circle. She proclaimed herself the mother of God, and announced the approaching arrival of a regenerating Messiah. An ancient ally of Robespierre, Dom Gerle, was the associate of her frenzy ; they held nocturnal orgies, in which Robespierre was invoked as the Supreme Pontiff. The Committee of Public Salvation, who were acquainted with all their proceedings, and from the majority of whom Robespierre was now almost entirely estranged, beheld, or feigned to behold, in these extravagances, a design to make him the head of a new religion, which might add to the force of political power the weight of spiritual fervour. Vadier was intrusted by the Committee with the duty of investi-

gating the mysteries ; his report, which was read amidst loud laughter in the Convention, represented the "conspiracy as the result partly of the immeasurable malice of the priests, partly of the formidable faction which the popular axe had destroyed!" It turned the fanatics into derision, but at the same time denounced them as worthy of death ; and they were accordingly thrown into prison. The opponents of Robespierre, in the Committee and Convention, eagerly seized hold of this circumstance to connect his name with the remnants of former superstition, and expose it to that most formidable of all assaults in France, the assault of ridicule. Robespierre strove to save these fanatics, but his colleagues withstood his influence : irritated, he retired from their meetings, from which he was absent for the next six weeks, and confined himself to the club of the Jacobins, where his power was still predominant.¹

CHAP.
XV.1794.
June 14.

¹ Rapport
de Vadier.
Hist. Parl.
xxxiii. 242,
259. Mig.
ii. 328.
Lac. xi. 59,
61. Th. vi.
336, 337,
356, 357.

Naturally suspicious, the apprehensions of the tyrant now increased to the highest degree. He had become not less fearful of his colleagues than of his enemies. His house was guarded by a body of Jacobins, armed with pistols, chiefly composed of jurymen from the Revolutionary Tribunal. He seldom went out unattended by this obnoxious band. His table was covered with letters, in which he was styled the "Envoy of God," the "New Messiah," the "New Orpheus."* On every side his portrait was to be seen in marble, bronze, or canvass, and below each, lines in which the Jacobinical poets extolled him above Cato and Aristides. In the bed of Catherine Théot there was found a letter addressed to

58.
Suspensions
of Robes-
pierre
awakened.

* "Toi qui éclaires l'univers par tes écrits, saisis d'effroi les tyrans, et rassures le cœur de tous les peuples, tu remplis le monde de ta renommée ; tes principes sont ceux de la nature, ton langage celui de l'humanité ; tu rends les hommes à leur dignité ; second créateur, tu régènes ici-bas le genre humain.—J. P. BESSOR."—*Papiers trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 116.

"Béni soit Robespierre, le digne imitateur de Brutus. Tous se reposent sur votre zèle incorruptible. La couronne, le triomphe vous sont dûs, et ils vous seront déferés en attendant que l'encens civique fume devant l'autel que nous

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Robespierre, in which he was styled, "the Son of the Supreme Being," "the Eternal Word," "the Redeemer of the Human Race," "the Messiah designated by the Prophets." Old women wrote to him in the strain of the Song of Simeon, rejoicing they had lived to see the advent of the day of salvation. Children over the whole Republic were called after his name; the admiration with which he was surrounded approached to idolatry. But all his efforts, and all the adulation of his satellites, could not dispel the terrors which had seized his mind. In his desk, after his death, was found a letter in the following terms:—"You yet live! assassin of your country, stained with the purest blood of France. I wait only the time when the people shall strike the hour of your fall. Should my hope prove vain, this hand which now writes thy sentence, this hand which thy bewildered eye seeks in vain, this hand which presses thine with horror, shall pierce thee to the heart. Every day I am with thee; every hour my uplifted arm is ready to cut short thy life. Vilest of men! live yet a few days to be tortured by the fear of my vengeance; sleep to dream of me; let my image and thy fear be the first prelude of thy punishment. This very night, in seeing thee, I shall enjoy thy terrors: but thy eyes shall seek in vain my avenging form."¹

¹ *Papiers trouvés chez Robespierre*, i. 57. *Deux Amis*, xii. 363, 364. *Mig.* ii. 328. *Lac.* xi. 63, 66. *Hist. Parl.* xxxiii. 244.

59.
Henriot and St Just urge vigorous measures.

His violent partisans strongly urged the immediate adoption of the most vigorous measures. They earnestly pressed him to assume the dictatorship, now that the municipality and the majority of the Convention were at his feet, and Danton and Hébert were no more. But he

vous élèverons, et que la postérité révèrera tant que les hommes connaîtront le prix de la liberté.—*Papiers trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 118.

"Votre tâche est écrite dans les livres du destin; elle sera digne de votre grande âme."—*Ibid.* ii. 119.

"La nature vient de me donner un fils; j'ai osé le charger du poids de ton nom. . . . Je me suis dit à moi-même—Robespierre a toujours été, et sera regardé dans les siècles futurs, comme la pierre de l'angle du superbe édifice de notre constitution. Plaise à Dieu que pour finir ton ouvrage tu ne confies qu'à toi-même l'exécution de ton plan et de tes desseins."—*Ibid.* ii. 125, 126.

constantly refused, alleging that the unity required was in the institutions, not the individuals, intrusted with the government. "A dictatorship," said he, "is the last step in the despair of nations. Founded as a barrier against tyranny, it soon becomes the greatest tyranny itself. It saves a day to ruin an age. Rather let the day perish, and the future be preserved ; let the people be misled, be injured, even ruined, rather than subjected to that humiliating guardianship which, under pretence of saving, in fact enslaves them. Nations have their childhood, their maturity, their old age—you must watch over the childhood, but not bury it. Unity is necessary to the Republic, I admit, but it is unity in institutions, not men ; so that, if a man is cut off, the unity may revive in his successor,* on the condition that that unity shall not be perpetuated long, and that the first magistrate shall speedily descend to the rank of a simple citizen. Many men are useful, none indispensable,—the people alone are immortal." Foiled in this proposal, Robespierre's friends unceasingly urged him to the most violent measures. Henriot and the mayor of Paris were ready to commence a new massacre, and had a body of three thousand young assassins ready to aid those of 2d September ; St Just and Couthon were to be relied on in the Committee of Public Salvation ; the president Dumas and the vice-president Coffinhal were to be depended on in the Revolutionary Tribunal. "Strike soon and strongly," said St Just. "DARE ! that is the sole secret of revolutions." The secret designs of Robespierre are clearly revealed in the following letter, written to him at this period by Payan, then mayor of Paris, and entirely devoted to his interests :—"The change of all others most essential is, to augment the powers of the *central government*. All our authority is useless ; it is alone by augmenting the executive that

* "Le Roi est mort : Vive le Roi." The same necessity of unity in power, and unbroken succession in that power, is felt by all governments, monarchical or democratic. The only difference is, that the former admits hereditary succession, the latter contends for rotation of office.

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any good can be done.* Would you crush the refractory deputies, obtain great victories in the interior; bring forward a report which may strike at once against all the disaffected. Pass salutary decrees to restrain the journals; render all the public functionaries responsible to you alone; let them be incessantly occupied in centralising public opinion: hitherto your efforts have been confined to the centralising of the physical government. I repeat it: you require a vast report, which may embrace at once all the conspirators. Blend them all together—the Dantonists, the Royalists, the Orléanists, the Hébertists, the Lafayettists, the Bourdonists. Commence the great work.” They had already marked out Tallien, Bourdon de l’Oise, Thuriot, Rovère, Lécointre, Panis, Monestier, Légendre, Fréron, Barras, and Cambon, as the first victims. But the conspirators had no armed force at their command: the club of the Jacobins, which they wielded at pleasure, was only powerful from its weight on public opinion; the committees of government were all arrayed on the other side. Robespierre, therefore, was compelled to commence the attack in the Convention: he expected to sway its members by the terror of his voice; or if, contrary to all former precedent, they held out, his reliance was on the municipality, and an insurrection of the people, similar to that which had been so successful on the 31st May.¹ By their aid he hoped to effect the proscription of his opponents in the Committee of Public Salvation, and their associates in the Mountain, as he had formerly done that of the Girondists, and of the Commission of Twelve, and measures were in pre-

¹ Deux Amis, xii. 354, 361. Hist. Parl. xxxiii. 356, 397, 398. Papiers Inédits trouvés chez Robespierre, i. 52, 55; and ii. 365. Lam. Hist. des Gir. viii. 151.

* “ Apprenez à tous les citoyens de la France qu’une mort infâme attend tous ceux qui s’opposent au gouvernement révolutionnaire; que les suggéreurs de Rapports fassent de réflexions salutaires, et que le Comité du Salut Public acquière plus de confiance, et plus d’importance, et plus d’autorité: *Augmentons, augmentons la masse du pouvoir central, pour qu’elle écrase facilement tous les conspirateurs. Vous ne pouvez pas choisir de circonstances plus favorables pour frapper tous les conspirateurs.*”—PAYAN à ROBESPIERRE, 9 Messidor, Ann. 2. *Papiers trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 359, 364.

paration at the Hôtel de Ville for carrying these intentions into effect.*

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60.

Insurrection
agreed on at
the Jacobins,
July 21.

In a meeting of the Jacobins, held on the 3d Thermidor (21st July), he prepared the minds of the audience for a revolt against the Convention. "The Assembly," said he, "labouring under the gangrene of corruption, and unable to throw off its impurities, is incapable of saving the Republic : both will perish ; the proscription of the patriots is the order of the day. For myself, I have one foot in the grave ; in a few days I shall place the other in it : the result is in the hands of Providence. You see between what shoals we are compelled to steer ; but we shall avoid shipwreck. Generally speaking, the Convention is pure : it is above fear as above crime. It has nothing in common with a knot of conspirators. For my own part, happen what may, I declare to the counter-revolutionists, who seek their own safety in the ruin of their country, that, despite all intrigues directed against me, I will continue to unmask the traitors, and to succour the oppressed." The Jacobins were by these and similar addresses prepared for a revolutionary movement ; but the secret of the insurrection, which was fixed for the 9th Thermidor, was confided only to Henriot and the mayor of Paris.¹

¹ Mig. ii.
329, 331.
Lac. xi. 68.
Th. vi. 355,
411. Journ.
de la Mont.
No. 85, p.
690.

The leaders of the Convention and of the committees, on their side, were not idle. The immediate pressure of danger had united all parties against Robespierre. He made no secret, in the popular society, of his resolution to decimate the Convention. At leaving one of the meetings where his designs had been openly expressed,

61.
Measures of
the Conven-
tion to resist
him.

* " Arrêté : Conseil-Général de la commune de Paris, 9 Thermidor—Collot d'Herbois, Amar, Léonard Bourdon, Fréron, Tallien, Panis, Carnot, Dubois Crancé, Vadier, Javoignes, Fouché, Granet, et Moïse Bayle, seront arrêtés, pour délivrer la Convention de l'oppression où ils la retiennent. Une couronne civique est offerte aux généreux citoyens qui arrêteront ces ennemis du peuple. Les mêmes hommes qui ont renversé le tyran et la faction Brissot, anéantiront tous ces scélérats désignés, qui ont osé plus que Louis XVI., puisqu'ils ont mis en arrestation les meilleurs patriotes."—*Pièce Inédite trouvée chez ROBESPIERRE* ; *Hist. Parl.* xxxiii. 356.

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Barère exclaimed—"That Robespierre is insatiable; because we won't do everything he wishes, he threatens to break with us. If he speaks of Thuriot, Guffroi, Rovère, and all the party of Danton, we understand him; even should he demand Tallien, Bourdon de l'Oise, Légendre, Fréron, we may consent in good time; but to ask Duval, Audoin, Leonard Bourdon, Vadier, Vouland, is out of the question. To proscribe members of the Committee of General Safety, is to put the poniard to all our throats." Impressed with these feelings, they resolved to stand on their guard; though they did not as yet venture to commence an attack on Robespierre, whose name was terrible, and his influence still so much the object of dread. They were indefatigable in their endeavours to discredit him with the public, and held meetings every night to concert measures for their common defence. These meetings were held sometimes at the house of Barras, sometimes at those of Tallien, Rovère, Bourdon de l'Oise, or other persons threatened. The extraordinary, the profound mystery in which the proceedings of Robespierre were kept, the scaffold ready to cut them off, gave these meetings all the character of a dark conspiracy. Robespierre had information that a conspiracy was hatching against his authority, and the police furnished him daily with notes on the proceedings of the conspirators; but with such circumspection did they act, that no distinct clue to their designs was obtained. Tallien was the leader of the party—an intrepid man, and an old supporter of the revolutionary tyranny, but who had been awakened, during his sanguinary mission to Bordeaux, to better feelings, by the influence of his beautiful mistress already mentioned, afterwards well known as Madame Tallien, of extraordinary attractions, and more than masculine firmness of character.¹

¹ Vilate,
Causes Se-
crètes de la
Rév. du 9
Therm. 37.
Hist. Parl.
xxxiii. 357.
Mig. ii. 329.
Lac. xi. 69.
70. Th. v.
410. Lam.
Hist. des
Gir. viii.
228, 237.

Meanwhile the leaders of the opposite parties, who now divided equally the committees and the Convention, were diverging from each other as much in the measures

which were severally advocated, as in the preparations they were making for mutual hostility. Alienated from his colleagues in the committees, disgusted with the universal turpitude and corruption with which government was surrounded, and seriously alarmed at the growing influence of public opinion, which daily called loudly for a stop to the carnage, Robespierre began at length to see the necessity of arresting the terrible effusion of blood, which had doubled in Paris since he had ceased to attend the Committee of Public Salvation. He meditated the destruction of Collot d'Herbois, Barère, and Billaud Varennes, as well as nearly all the members of the Committee of General Safety. He was at length awakened to the hopelessness of going on destroying till every Royalist, intriguer, Dantonist, or guilty functionary, was no more ; he became alive to the dreadful nature of the system of government when it had ceased to be immediately directed by himself, and threatened a dangerous reaction. His private letters to his brother, during the six weeks which preceded his fall, deplored the system which was going forward, and its fatal effect in alienating, by the horror it excited, the supporters of the Revolution. He was seldom, between the 15th June and the 24th July, to be seen at the Convention ; but his speeches at the Jacobin Club loudly condemned the cruel measures of the committees, professed a disposition to return at last to a more moderate system of government, and openly announced the necessity of destroying the tyrants who were oppressing innocence throughout France.¹ * He had

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62.

Robespierre
at length
inclines to
stop the
effusion of
blood.¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxiii. 320,
328, 341.Journ. de la
Mont. Vol.
v. No. 77,
p. 625. Lam.
Hist. des
Gir. viii.
232.

* This appears more particularly in the debate at the Jacobins on 11th July (23 Messidor) 1794, of which a very imperfect report is preserved. Robespierre then said—" Les principes de l'orateur sont d'arrêter l'effusion du sang humain versé par le crime. Les auteurs des complots dénoncés n'aspirent au contraire qu'à immoler tous les patriotes, et surtout la Convention Nationale, depuis que le Comité a indiqué les vues dont elle devait se purger. Quels sont ceux qui sans cause ont distingué l'erreur du crime, et qui ont défendu les patriotes égarés ?—Ne sont-ils pas les membres du Comité ? Ceux qui réclament la justice ne peuvent être redoutables qu'aux chefs de factions ; et ceux qui veulent perdre dans l'opinion les membres du Comité ne peuvent avoir d'autre intention que de servir les projets des tyrans intéressés à la chute d'un comité

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even gone so far as to frame a ministry, to be formed after he had destroyed his enemies in the committees. Hermann was to be intrusted with the home administration ; Payan and Julien with public instruction ; Buchot or Fourcède with foreign affairs ; D'Albarade with the marine ; and Henriot was to be mayor of Paris.

63.

Measures of
the Committee
of Public Salva-
tion during
Robespierre's ab-
sence.
July 23.

During Robespierre's secession from the Committee of Public Salvation, however, that terrible body had lost none of its fearful and bloodthirsty energy. The daily executions in the capital had doubled, and now sometimes rose as high as seventy or eighty in a day ; and on the 6th Thermidor, three days before the fall of Robespierre, the Committee of Public Salvation, "to judge more quickly the enemies of the people, in detention over the

qui les découvre, et qui les anéantira bientôt."—*Journal de la Montagne*, 24 Messidor 1794, No. 77, vol. v. p. 25.

Napoleon was of opinion that the character of Robespierre had been too severely handled by subsequent writers. "He was of opinion," says Las Cases, "that Robespierre had neither talent, nor force, nor system : that he was *the true emissary of the Revolution*, who was sacrificed the moment that he strove to arrest it in its course—the fate of all those who before himself had engaged in the attempt ; but that he was by no means the monster that was commonly believed." "Robespierre," said he, "was at last desirous to *stop the public executions*. He had not been at the Committees for six weeks before his fall : and in his letters to his brother, who was attached to the army at Nice—letters which I myself saw—he *deplored the atrocities which were going forward*, as ruining the Revolution by the pity which they excited. Cambacérès, who is to be regarded as an authority for that epoch, said to me, in relation to the condemnation of Robespierre, 'Sire, that was a case in which judgment was pronounced without hearing the accused.' ('Un procès jugé, mais non plaidé.') You may add to that, that his intentions were different from what is generally supposed. He had a plan, after having overturned the furious factions whom he required to combat, to have returned to a system of order and moderation." "Some time before his fall," said Cambacérès, "he pronounced a discourse on that subject, full of the greatest beauties : it was not permitted to be inserted in the *Moniteur*, and all traces of it have, in consequence, been lost."—LAS CASES, i. 366. This is the one already referred to, pronounced at the Jacobins, 23 Messidor (11th July) 1794, *Journal de la Montagne*, v. 25, No. 77. Levasseur de la Sarthe also strenuously supports the same opinion ; maintaining that Robespierre was cut off just at the moment when he was preparing to return to a system of humanity and beneficence. "What think you of Robespierre ?" said some one to Levasseur at Brussels, in his old age. "Robespierre !" answered he, "do not mention his name ; it is all I regret : the Mountain was under a cloud when it sacrificed him." Vadier, an exile, and ninety years of age, was of the same opinion. "I am ninety-two," said he in his old age ; "the force of my opinion is daily increasing. There is but one act of my life which I regret, and that is having misunderstood Robespierre, and taken a citizen for a tyrant."—LEVAS-

whole Republic," had agreed to a decree appointing four popular commissions, to try without juries the whole prisoners in the different jails in the departments.* The name of Robespierre is not affixed to this resolution ; but it was entirely in conformity with a plan which Payan, his intimate friend, proposed to him, in order to dispose of *nine thousand prisoners* at Orange, who were summarily judged by a commission sent down from Paris, which destroyed them with unheard-of rapidity.† And from a manuscript note in his own handwriting, found among Robespierre's papers after his death, there is one which openly announces the intention of cutting off the whole middle classes, and for that purpose arming against them the lower.‡ Vadier, Amar, Vouland, and the other

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SEUR, iv. 110, 111. If this be true, it only augments the weight of the moral lesson to be derived from their history—that, even by such men, a return to order and justice was found to be indispensable, but that even to them the attempt at such a return was fatal. LAMARTINE, *Hist. des Girondins*, viii. 241.

* Les Comités de Salut Public et de Sûreté Générale arrêtent—

1. Il sera nommé dans trois jours des citoyens chargés de remplir les fonctions de quatre commissions populaires créées par décret du 13 Ventose.

2. Elles jugeront tous les détenus dans les maisons d'arrêt des départemens.

3. Elles seront sédentaires à Paris.

4. Les jugemens de ces commissions seront révisés par les Comités du Salut Public et de Sûreté Générale.

5. Il sera distribué à chaque commission un arrondissement de plusieurs départemens. (*Signé*) B. Barère, Dubarran, C. A. Prieur, Louis du Bas Rhin, Lavicomterie, Collot d'Herbois, Carnot, Couthon, R. Lindet, Saint Just, Billaud Varennes, Vouland, Vadier, Amar, M. Bayle."—*Hist. Parl.* xxxiii. 395.

† "*Neuf à dix mille personnes à mettre en jugement à Orange ; impossibilité de les transférer à Paris.* On propose, 1 Créer un Tribunal Révolutionnaire, qui siégera à Orange à l'effet de juger les contre-révolutionnaires du département de Vaucluse, et ceux des Bouches du Rhône. 2. Le composer d'un accusateur public et de six juges. 3. L'autorité se divisera en deux sections. 4. Il jugera révolutionnairement, *sans instruction écrite, et sans assistance du jury.*" This Tribunal, accordingly, was instituted, and the president in a few days wrote to Payan—" Nous avons plus fait dans les six premiers jours de notre activité que n'a fait dans un mois le Tribunal Révolutionnaire de Nîmes ; nous avons rendu 197 jugemens dans 18 jours."—*Deux Amis*, xii. 344, 345 ; and *Papiers Inédits trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, i. 77, 372.

‡ Il faut une volonté—une. Les dangers intérieurs viennent des bourgeois—il faut rallier le peuple. Il faut que les Sans-culottes soient payés et restent dans les villes. Il faut leur procurer des armes, les éclairer en ce que l'insurrection s'étende de proche en proche et sur le même plan. Il faut proscrire les écrivains comme les plus dangereux ennemis de la patrie, et punir surtout le députés et les administrateurs coupables. Si les députés sont envoyés, la République est perdue."—*Note écrite de la main de ROBESPIERRE ; Deux Amis*, xii. 353. *Papiers trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, i. 36, and ii. 15.

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¹ Papiers
trouvés
chez Robes-
pierre, No.
94. Deux
Amis, xii.
344, 350.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir, viii.
240.

members of the Committee of General Safety, vied with Collot d'Herbois and Billaud Varennes in that of Public Salvation, in measures of extermination. So familiar had the work of destruction become, that it had grown into a subject of merriment. "This is well; the crop is large; the baskets will be filled," said one, when signing a long list "for execution." "I could not help laughing at the figure these wretches cut on the scaffold," exclaimed another. "I often go to see the executions," said a third; "come to-morrow, there will be a grand display." In effect, the members of the committees sometimes went to contemplate the last moments of their victims from some of the neighbouring windows.¹

64.

The contest
begins in the
Convention.
Robes-
pierre's last
speech.

At length, on the 8th Thermidor (26th July), the contest began in the National Convention. The discourse of Robespierre, which he had composed the day before in the solitudes of the forest of Montmorency, under the inspiration of the genius of Rousseau, was dark and enigmatical, but earnest and eloquent. He wore the dress in which he had appeared at the fête of the Supreme Being on the 7th June. "Citizens," said he, "let others lay before you flattering pictures; I will unveil the real truth. I come not to increase terrors spread abroad by perfidy; I come to defend your outraged authority, and violated independence: I will also defend myself. You will not be taken by surprise, for you have nothing in common with the tyrants who attack me. The cries of oppressed innocence will not offend your ears; their cause cannot be alien to you. Tyrants seek to destroy the cause of freedom, by giving it the name of tyranny; patriots reply only by the force of truth. Think not I am here to prefer accusations; I am coming to discharge duty—to unfold the hideous plots which threaten the ruin of the Republic. We have not been too severe. I call to witness the Republic, which yet breathes—the Convention, surrounded by the respect of the people—the patriots, who groan in the dungeons which wretches have

opened for them. It is not we who have plunged the patriots into prisons ; it is the monsters whom we have accused. It is not we who, forgetting the crimes of the aristocracy, and protecting the traitors, have declared war against peaceable citizens, and erected into crimes things indifferent, to find guilty persons everywhere, and render the Revolution terrible even to the people ; it is the monsters whom we have to accuse.

“They call me a tyrant. If I were so, they would fall at my feet : I should have gorged them with gold, assured them of impunity to their crimes, and they would have worshipped me. Had I been so, the kings whom we have conquered would have been my most cordial supporters. It is by the aid of scoundrels you arrive at tyranny. Whither tend those who combat them ? To the tomb and immortality ! Who is the tyrant that protects me ? What is the faction to which I belong ? It is yourselves ! What is the party which, since the commencement of the Revolution, has crushed all other factions—has annihilated so many specious traitors ? It is yourselves ; it is the people ; it is the force of principles ! This is the party to which I am devoted, and against which crime is everywhere leagued. I am ready to lay down my life without regret. I have seen the past ; I foresee the future. What lover of his country would wish to live when he can no longer succour oppressed innocence ? Why should he desire to remain in an order of things where intrigue eternally triumphs over truth ; where justice is deemed an imposture ; where the vilest passions, the most ridiculous fears, fill every heart, instead of the sacred interests of humanity ? Who can bear the punishment of seeing that horrible succession of traitors more or less skilful in concealing their hideous vices under the mask of virtue, and who will leave to posterity the difficult task of determining which was the most atrocious ? In contemplating the multitude of vices which the Revolution has let loose

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pell-mell with the civic virtues, I own I sometimes fear I shall be sullied in the eyes of posterity by their calumnies. But I am consoled by the reflection that, if I have seen in history all the defenders of liberty overwhelmed by calumny, I have seen their oppressors die also. The good and the bad disappear alike from the earth ; but in very different conditions. No, Chaumette ! ‘Death is *not* an eternal sleep !’—Citizens, efface from the tombs that maxim engraven by sacrilegious hands, which throws a funereal pall over nature, which discourages oppressed innocence : write rather, ‘Death is the commencement of immortality !’ I leave to the oppressors of the people a terrible legacy, which well becomes the situation in which I am placed : it is the awful truth, ‘Thou shalt die !’

“We no longer tread on roses ; we are marching on a volcano. For six weeks I have been reduced to a state of impotence in the Committee of Public Salvation ; during that time has faction been better restrained, or the country more happy ? Representatives of the people, the time has arrived when you should assume the attitude which befits you ; you are not placed here to be governed, but to govern the depositaries of your confidence. Let it be spoken out at once : a conspiracy exists against the public freedom ; it springs from a criminal intrigue in the bosom of the Convention ; that intrigue is conducted by the members of the Committee of General Safety ; the enemies of the Republic have contrived to array that Committee against that of Public Salvation ; even some members of this latter have been infected ; and the coalition thus formed seeks to ruin the country. What is the remedy for the evil ? To punish the traitors ; to purge the committees of their unworthy members ; to place the Committee of General Safety under the control of that of Public Salvation ; to establish the unity of government under the auspices of the Convention ; and thus to crush faction under the weight of the national representation, and raise on its ruins the power of justice and freedom.”¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxiii. 406,
446.

This speech was received with breathless attention ; not a sound was heard during its delivery ; not a whisper of applause followed its close. At the proposal that it should be printed, the first symptoms of resistance began. Bourdon de l'Oise opposed its publication ; but, Barère having supported it, the Convention, fearful of committing itself openly with its enemies, agreed to the proposal. The members of the Committee of General Safety, seeing the majority wavering, deemed it now necessary to take decisive steps. "It is no longer time," said Cambon, "for dissembling : one man paralyses the Assembly, and that man is Robespierre."—"We must pull the mask off any countenance on which it is placed," said Billaud Varennes ; "I would rather that my carcass served for a throne to the tyrant, than render myself by my silence the accomplice of his crimes."—"It is not enough," said Vadier, "for him to be a tyrant ; he aims further, like a second Mahomet, at being proclaimed the envoy of God." Fréron proposed to throw off the hated yoke of the committees. "The moment is at last arrived," said he, "to revive the liberty of opinion. I propose that the Assembly shall reverse the decree which permitted the arrest of the representatives of the people ; who can debate with freedom when imprisonment is hanging over his head ?" Some applause followed this proposal ; but Robespierre was felt to be too powerful to be overthrown by the Convention, unaided by the committees : this extreme measure therefore was rejected, and the Assembly contented itself with reversing the decree which ordered the publication of his address, and sent it to the committees for examination. "Had Robespierre," said Barère, "for the last four decades attended the committee, or attended to its operations, he would have suppressed his address. You must banish from your thoughts the word *accused*." In the end Robespierre retired, surprised at the resistance he had experienced, but still confident of success on the following day, from the contemplated insurrection of the

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65.

Vehement
debate on
this speech.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxiii. 449,
452. Journ.
de la Mont.
9 Thermi-
dor, Vol.
vi. No. 91.
Lac. xi. 79,
80. Th. vi.
421, 424.

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66.

Extraordi-
nary meet-
ing at the
Jacobins.

Jacobins and of the municipality, and the unbounded influence which he had long enjoyed with the people.

In the evening he repaired to the popular society, where he was received with enthusiasm. Henriot, Dumas, Coffinhal, and his other satellites, surrounded him, and declared themselves ready for action. After reading the speech he had delivered in the Convention, Robespierre said—"That speech is my last testament. I see how it is : the league against me is so powerful that I cannot hope to escape it. I die without regret. I bequeath to you my memory. You will defend it." "No ; you shall live, or we shall die together," exclaimed the people from the galleries. "No," he replied ; "I have read to you my testament ; my death-bed testament." Upon these words, pronounced in a solemn and mournful tone, sobs were heard in all parts of the hall. Coffinhal, Duplay, Payan, Buonarotti, Lebas, David, rose at once and conjured him not to despair, but to save them, the country, and himself. "I know," said Henriot, "the road to the Convention, and I am ready to take it again."—"Go," said Robespierre, "separate the wicked from the weak ; deliver the Assembly from the wretches who enthrall it ; render it the service which it expects from you, as you did on the 31st May and the 2d June. March ! you may yet save liberty !" After describing the attacks directed against his person, he added, "I am ready, if necessary, to drink the cup of Socrates."—"Robespierre," exclaimed David, "I am ready to drink it with you : the enemies of Robespierre are those of the country ; let them be named, and they shall cease to exist."¹ * Couthon then proposed the immediate expulsion of all the members of the Convention who had voted against the printing of Robespierre's speech, and they were instantly, including Collot d'Herbois and Billaud Varennes, forcibly turned out, in

¹ Hist. Parl. xxxiv. 23. Th. ii. 426, 427. Hist. de la Conv. iv. 39, 64. Journ. de la Mont. v. 779. Lam. Hist. des Gir. viii. 310.

* David, much to his credit, admitted, *after* the 9th Thermidor, he had said this. "Robespierre s'écria qu'il ne lui restait qu'à boire la ciguë. Je lui dis : 'Je la boirai avec toi.'"—*Paroles de DAVID, Séance du 10 Thermidor 1794 ; Journal de la Montagne*, 11, 93, p. 779, vol. v.

the midst of mingled hisses and menaces. During all the night, Robespierre made arrangements for the disposal of his partisans on the following day. Their point of rendezvous was fixed at the Hôtel de Ville, where they were to be in readiness to receive his orders from the National Convention.

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The two committees, on their side, were not idle. During the whole night they sat in deliberation. It was felt by every one that a combination of all parties was required to shake the redoubted power of Robespierre. All their efforts, accordingly, were directed to this object. St Just continued firm to his leader ; but, by unremitting exertions, the Jacobins of the Mountain succeeded in forming a coalition with the leaders of the Plain and of the Right. Tallien, who was the life of the conspiracy, was stimulated to exertion by the danger of Theresa de Fontenay, who was in prison, and threatened with instant death if the power of Robespierre was not immediately destroyed. She had contrived, by bribing the jailors, to send a note written with blood to him, which was secretly put into his hand in the street, by a female who instantly disappeared, which announced her trial for the succeeding day.* This intelligence stimulated his efforts, and he was indefatigable in his endeavours to bring about the requisite coalition of parties. "Do not flatter yourselves," said Tallien to the Girondists, "that he will ever spare you ; you have committed an unpardonable offence in being freemen. Let us bury our ruinous divisions in oblivion. You weep for Vergniaud—we weep for Danton ; let us unite their shades by striking Robespierre."† "Do you still live ?" said he to the

67.
Mutual pre-
parations
during the
night.

* "L'administrateur de police sort d'ici ; il est venu m'annoncer que demain je monterai au tribunal ; c'est-à-dire à l'échafaud. Cela ressemble bien peu au rêve que j'ai fait cette nuit—Robespierre n'existait plus, et les prisons étaient ouvertes. Mais, grâce à votre insigne lâcheté, il ne se trouvera bientôt plus personne en France capable de le réaliser."—THERESA à TALLIEN, 7th Thermidor 1794 ; LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, viii. 316.

† "Le ciel entre nos mains a mis le sort de Rome,
Et son salut dépend de la perte d'un homme :

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¹ Durand de
Maillane,
ch. x. Hist.
Parl. xxxiv.
5. Deux
Amis, xii.
389. Lac.
vi. 88, 93.
Th. vi. 430,
431. Lam.
Hist. des
Gir. viii.
269.

Jacobins ; “has the tyrant spared you this night ? yet your names are the foremost on the list of proscription. In a few days he will have your heads, if you do not take his. For two months you have shielded us from his strokes ; you may now rely on our support as on our gratitude.” The *Côté droit* long resisted the energetic efforts made by the Jacobins in the Convention to bring them over to a coalition, but at length they acquiesced, unable, as they themselves said, to bear any longer the sight of fifty heads falling a-day. The friends of Danton were so exasperated at the death of their leader, that they repelled at first all advances towards a reconciliation ; but at length, moved by the entreaties of the Plain and the Right, they agreed to join the conspiracy. Before daybreak, all the Convention had united for the overthrow of the tyrant.¹

68.
Meeting of
the 9th
Thermidor.
July 27.

At an early hour on the morning of the 9th Thermidor (27th July), the benches of the Convention were thronged by its members ; those of the Mountain were particularly remarkable for the serried ranks and determined looks of the coalition. The leaders walked about the passages, confirming each other in their resolution. Bourdon de l’Oise pressed Durand Maillane by the hand, Rovère and Tallien followed his example—“ Oh, the gentlemen of the *Côté droit* are honest men !” said the latter. Tallien evinced that undoubting confidence which is so often the presage and cause of success. “ Take your place,” said he, entering from the lobby where he had been walking with Durand Maillane ; “ I have come to witness the triumph of freedom ; this evening Robespierre is no more.”² At noon St Just mounted the tribune : Robespierre took his station on the bench

² Durand de
Maillane,
ch. x. Lac.
xi. 94. Hist.
Parl. xxxiv.
6. Deux
Amis, xii.
389, 396.
Th. vi. 432.
Hist. de la
Conv. iv.
123.

Si l'on doit le nom d'homme à qui n'a rien d'humain
A ce tigre altéré de tout le sang Romain !
Combien pour le repandre a-t-il formé de brigues ;
Combien de fois changé de partis et de ligues,
Tantôt ami d'Antoine, et tantôt ennemi,
Et jamais insolent ni cruel à demi.”

CORNEILLE, *Cinna*, Act 1, Scene 3.

directly opposite, to intimidate his adversaries by his look. But he could not bear the glance of Tallien, whose countenance expressed the greatest determination, and whom he with justice regarded as his most formidable adversary. Already his weakness, on the approach of personal danger, was manifest. His knees trembled, the colour fled from his lips as he ascended to his seat; the hostile appearance of the Convention already gave him an anticipation of his fate.

St Just commenced the debate with a speech from the tribune. "I belong," said he, "to no party; I will combat them all. The course of events has possibly determined that this tribune should be the Tarpeian rock for him who now tells you that the members of the committees have strayed from the path of wisdom." Upon this he was violently interrupted by Tallien, who took the lead in the revolt. "Shall the speaker," said he, "for ever arrogate to himself, with the tyrant of whom he is the satellite, the privilege of denouncing, accusing, and proscribing the members of the Assembly? Shall he for ever go on amusing us with imaginary perils, when real and pressing dangers are before our eyes? After the enigmatical expressions of the tyrant yesterday from that place, can we doubt what St Just is about to propose? You are about," said he, "to raise the veil: I will tear it asunder!" Loud applauses on all sides followed this exclamation. "Yes!" exclaimed he, "I will tear it asunder. I will exhibit the danger in its full extent; the tyrant in his true colours! It is the whole Convention which he now proposes to destroy. He knows well, since his overthrow yesterday, that, however much he may mutilate that great body, he will no longer find it the instrument of his tyrannical designs. He is resolved that no sanctuary should exist for freedom, no retreat for the friends of the Republic. He has in consequence resolved to destroy you all; yes, this very day; ay, in a few hours. Two thousand assassins have sworn to execute his

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69.

Vehement
eloquence
of Tallien.

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designs; I myself last night heard their oaths, and fifty of my colleagues heard them with me. The massacre was to have commenced in the night with the Committee of Public Salvation and that of General Safety, all of whom were to have been sacrificed, except a few creatures of the tyrant; the fidelity of the soldiers, who feared the Convention, alone has preserved them from this terrible calamity. Let us instantly take measures commensurate to the magnitude of the danger; let us declare our sittings permanent till the conspiracy is broken, and its chiefs arrested. I have no difficulty in naming them; I have followed their steps through their bloody conspiracy: I name Dumas, the atrocious President of the Revolutionary Tribunal; I name Henriot, the infamous commander of the national guard.”¹

¹ Journ. de
la Mont. vol.
v. No. 92, p.
745. Hist.
Parl. xxxiv.
6, 21.

70.
Speech of
Billaud
Varennes.

Here Billaud Varennes interrupted the orator, and gave some fuller details on the conspiracy which had been matured in the Society of the Jacobins, and denounced Robespierre as its chief. “Yesterday,” said he, “at the Jacobins were several base apostates; hardly one of them had tickets of admission, but they fully developed the plan of massacring the Convention. There I heard the most infamous sallies vented against the men who have never deviated from the Revolution. I see on the Mountain there, some of the men who menaced the national representation.” At these words a cry arose—“Seize him! seize him!” and the individual alluded to was dragged from his seat, and hurled out amidst loud applause. “The Assembly will perish,” he concluded, “if it shows the least signs of weakness.”—“We shall never perish!” exclaimed the members, rising in a transport of enthusiasm from their seats. Tallien resumed: “Can there be any doubt now about the reality of the conspiracy? have you conquered so many tyrants only to crouch beneath the yoke of the most atrocious of them all? I see among you a new Cromwell. The charge against Robespierre is already written in your hearts. Is there one among you who will declare that he is not

an oppressor? If there is, let him stand forth; for him have I offended. Tremble, tyrant! tremble! See with what horror freemen shrink from your polluted touch! We enjoy your agony; but the public safety requires it should no longer be prolonged. I declare, if the National Convention hesitate to pass the decree of accusation, I will plunge this dagger in your bosom:" and he drew the glittering steel from his breast in the midst of deafening shouts from the Convention, which shook with the tumult. During this impassioned harangue, which was pronounced with the most vehement action, Robespierre sat motionless, but deadly pale. The Convention, amidst a violent tumult, declared its sittings permanent till the sword of the law had secured the Revolution, and decreed the arrest of Henriot, Dumas, and the other associates of the tyrant; and numerous measures of precaution were suggested.¹

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¹ Journ. de la Mont. No. 92, vol. v. Hist. Parl. xxxiv. 21, 24; and Moniteur, July 29, p. 1272.

Robespierre tried in vain, during the tumult which followed this address, to obtain a hearing. The president, Thuriot, whom he had often threatened with death, constantly drowned his voice by ringing his bell. In vain he looked for support among the former satellites of his power; all, frozen with terror, shrank from his gaze. "*A bas le tyran!*" resounded from all sides of the hall. Barère then, in the name of the Committee of Public Salvation, related that an officer of the Allies, made prisoner in a late action in Belgium, had said—"All your successes will not avail you; we are not the less confident; we shall conclude a peace with *a fraction of the Convention*, and soon change the government.' The government cannot conceal that the moment of danger has arrived. The committees are attacked; their members are covered with calumnies; the conspirators would destroy whatever intelligence or energy there is in the country, and denounce members on whose patriotism you are now to pronounce." On his motion the Convention decreed, by acclamation, that all ranks in the national guard above that of chief of a legion should be suppressed, that each commander of a legion should

71.
Dreadful
agitation
in the As-
sembly.

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command in his turn, and that the mayor and municipality of Paris should answer with their heads for the security of the Convention. This decree was levelled at Henriot. But Tallien, who perceived that, amidst these multifarious proposals, the main object of destroying Robespierre was likely to be forgotten, resumed his place in the tribune. "Let us think only of the tyrant : you have not a moment to lose ; he is every hour collecting his strength. Why accumulate charges, when his conduct is engraven on every heart ? Let him perish by the arm he has invented to destroy others. To what accused did *he* ever give the right of speaking in his defence ? Let us say with the juries of the Revolutionary Tribunal, ' Our minds have long been made up.' If you declare him *hors la loi*, can he complain who has put *hors la loi* nine-tenths of France ? Let there be no formalities with the accused ; you cannot too much abridge their punishment : he has told you so himself a hundred times. Let us strike him in the bosom of the Assembly ; let his associates perish with him on the bench of the Revolutionary Tribunal, in the club of the Jacobins, at the head of the traitorous municipality.¹

¹ Hist. Parl. xxxiv. 25, 29. Journ. de la Mont. Vol. v. No. 92, p. 756. Lac. xi. 100, 102. Mig. ii. 338, 339.

72.
Contest of
Tallien and
Robespierre.

"Were I," continued Tallien, "to recount the acts of individual oppression of which he has been guilty, I would say that, during the time when Robespierre was charged with the general police, they have all been committed, and that the patriots of the Revolutionary Committee of the Section of Indivisibility have been arrested."—"It is false !" cried Robespierre ; "I"—Loud cries drowned his voice. For a moment he fixed an eager gaze on the most ardent of the Mountain. Some averted their eyes ; others looked down : the great majority remained motionless. Casting then a despairing look round the hall, he at length turned to the few survivors of the Girondists. "Turn away from these benches !" they exclaimed ; "Vergniaud and Condorcet have sat here."—"Pure and virtuous citizens," said he to the deputies on the right, "will you give me the liberty of speech which the assassins

refuse?" A profound silence followed the demand. "For the last time, President of Assassins!" said he, turning to the chair, "will you allow me to speak?" The continued noise drowned his voice. "You shall not have it but in your turn;" and soon "Never, never!" resounded on all sides.

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"Diversi lingue, orribili favelle,
Parole di dolore, accenti d'ira,
Voci alte e fioche, e suon di man con elle,
Facevano un tumulto, il qual s'aggira
Sempre 'n quell' aria senza tempo tinta,
Come la rena quando 'l turbo spira." *

He then sank on his seat, pale and exhausted; his voice, which had become a shrill scream from agitation and vehemence, at length totally failed; foam issued from his mouth. "Wretch!" exclaimed a voice from the Mountain, "you are choked by the blood of Danton."—"Ah! you would avenge Danton," rejoined Robespierre: "cowards! why did you not defend him?"—"I demand the arrest of Robespierre," cried Louchet. "Agreed! agreed!" resounded on all sides. "Citizens," exclaimed Billaud Varennes, "liberty is about to be restored."—"Say rather," replied Robespierre, "that crime is about to prevail: the Republic is abandoned to brigands." The act of accusation was then carried amidst the most violent agitation. The younger brother of Robespierre had the generosity to insist that he should be included in the charge. "I am as culpable as my brother," said he; "I share his virtues, I am willing to share his fate." Lebas followed his example. At length the two Robespierres, Lebas, Couthon, St Just, Dumas, and Henriot, were unanimously decreed under arrest, and ordered to be sent to prison; and the Convention broke up, in the utmost agitation, at five o'clock.¹

¹ Lac. xi.
104. Toul.
iv. 382, 383.
Levasseur,
iii. 147.
Hist. Parl.
xxxiv. 31,
34. Journ.
de la Mont.
No. 92, pp.
751, 752.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. viii.
337, 338.

* "Various tongues,
Horrible languages, outcries of woe,
Accents of anger, voices deep and hoarse,
With hands together smote, that swell'd the sounds,
Made up a tumult that for ever whirls
Round through that air with solid darkness stain'd,
Like to the sand that in the whirlwind flies."

CARY'S DANTE, *Inferno*, iii. 25.

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73.
Prepara-
tions to sup-
port Robes-
pierre at the
Hotel de
Ville.

During this terrible contest, the partisans of Robespierre were collecting at the hall of the Jacobins and the Hôtel de Ville. They expected that he would be victorious in the Convention, and that the armed force would only be called on to support its decrees. Part of the national guard were assembled at the rendezvous, when a messenger arrived from the Convention requiring the mayor to appear at the bar, and give an account of the state of the capital. "Return to your associates," said Henriot with his drawn sabre in his hand, "and say that we are in deliberation here how to purify their ranks. Tell Robespierre to remain firm and fear nothing. He is supported by the people." Payan hastily drew up an address, in which they denounced to the people the oppressors of the most virtuous of patriots, Robespierre, St Just, the Apostle of Virtue, and Couthon, "whose heart and head alone live; the flame of patriotism has consumed his body." * But alarming news soon arrived. At half-past four they received intelligence of the arrest of Robespierre and his accomplices, which soon circulated with the rapidity of lightning through Paris. Instantly they gave orders to sound the tocsin, close the barriers, convoke the General Council, and assemble the Sections. The Jacobins declared their sittings permanent; an energetic proclamation, calling on the people to rise, was issued from the Hôtel de Ville; and the most rapid means of

* The following are the terms of this proclamation:—"Brothers and Friends, the country is in imminent danger: the wicked have mastered the Convention, where they hold in chains the virtuous Robespierre, who passed the decree so consoling to humanity on the existence of God and the immortality of the soul; Couthon, that venerable citizen, who has but a heart and a head alive, as the rest of his body has been consumed by patriotism; St Just, that virtuous apostle, who first checked treason in the army of the Rhine and the north; Lebas, their worthy colleague; the younger Robespierre, so well known for his labours with the army of Italy. And who are their enemies? Collet d'Herbois, an old comedian, convicted under the old régime of having stolen the strong-box of his troop of players; Bourdon de l'Oise, the perpetual calumniator of the municipality of Paris; one Barère, the ready tool of every faction which is uppermost; one Tallien, and Fréron, the intimate friends of the infamous Danton. To arms! To arms! Let us not lose the fruit of the 10th August and the 2d June. Death to the traitors!"—*Hist. Parl.* xxxiv. 46.

communication were established between these two great centres of the insurrection. To excite the people to revolt, Henriot, with a drawn sabre in his hand, at the head of his staff, traversed the streets, exclaiming, "To arms, to save the country!" In his course through the Faubourg St Antoine, he met the procession of forty-nine prisoners proceeding as usual to execution: the crowd had stopped the chariots, and loudly demanded that they should be released, which Samson, the long-practised executioner, endeavoured to support: but Henriot had the barbarity to order them to be led on, and they all suffered. On his return, two deputies of the Convention met him in the Rue St Honoré, and prevailed on some horsemen to obey the orders of the Convention, and arrest his person: he was handcuffed, and conducted to the Committee of General Safety. About the same time Payan was seized. The Convention seemed triumphant; its principal enemies were in confinement.¹

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¹ Hist. Parl. xxxiv. 41, 47. Journ. de la Mont. No. 92. Deux Amis, xii. 398, 401. Moniteur, 30 Juillet, p. 1276. Lac. xi. 105, 109. Toul. iv. 384, 385. Th. vi. 442, 443. Hist. de la Conv. vi. 164. Lam. Hist. des Gir. viii. 350.

But the insurgents regained their advantage between six and seven o'clock, in consequence of the dispersion of the members of the Convention and the energetic measures of the municipality. Robespierre had been sent to the Luxembourg, where he was refused entrance, on the ground that the commune had prohibited them from receiving any prisoner but such as they had committed. He was then taken to the central police-office, where he was at once received in triumph by the officers of the municipality. The younger Robespierre had been sent to Saint Lazare, Couthon to the Bourbe, St Just to the Ecossais, and the other conspirators to the different prisons of Paris. The magistrates sent detachments to deliver them. Robespierre was speedily brought in triumph to the Hôtel de Ville, where he was received with the utmost enthusiasm, and soon joined by his brother and St Just. Coffinhal set off at the head of two hundred cannoneers to deliver Henriot; he arrived in the Place du Carrousel, and having forced the guard of the Convention,

74.
Robespierre is imprisoned, but liberated.

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penetrated to the rooms of the Committee of General Safety, and delivered that important leader. The dictatorship was now earnestly pressed upon Robespierre by his friends ; but he firmly refused it to the very last. "The people," cried Couthon, "await only a word from you to annihilate their enemies and your own. Prepare at least a proclamation, telling them what to do."—"In the name of whom?" replied Robespierre. "In the name of the oppressed Convention," rejoined St Just. "Recollect the line of Sertorius," added Couthon—

" 'Rome n'est plus dans Rome, elle est toute où je suis.' " *

"No, no," replied Robespierre ; "I will not give the first example of the national representation being enslaved by a citizen. We are nothing save by the people ; we must not supplant their rights by our wishes."—"Then," cried Couthon, "nothing remains for us but to die."—"You have said it," answered Robespierre, leaning his head on his hands, his elbows resting on the council table. "Well, then," said St Just, "it is you who murder us." During this dialogue, Robespierre cast his eyes on a paper on the table, where such a proclamation was drawn up. Conquered by the importunity of his friends, he took up the pen to sign it ; but after he had written half his name, he threw the paper and pen from him.¹

The Convention met at seven o'clock. Intelligence was immediately brought of the fearful successes of the insurgents, their insurrectionary measures, the liberation of the Triumvirs, the assemblage at the Hôtel de Ville, the convocation of revolutionary committees, and of the sections. In the midst of the alarm, the members of the two committees, driven from their offices, arrived in consternation with the account of the forcing of the Tuileries, the delivery of Henriot, and the presence of an armed force round the Convention. The agitation was at its height, when Amar entered and announced, that the

¹ Mig. ii.
342. Th. iv.
445. Deux
Amis, xii.
401. Hist.
Parl. xxxiv.
41, 49. Lac.
xi. 109.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. viii.
360.

75.
Extreme
danger of
the Conven-
tion.

* "Rome is no longer in Rome : it is where I am."

terrible cannoneers had pointed their guns against the walls of their hall. "Citizens," said the President, covering his face with his robe, "the hour is arrived to die at our posts; the conspirators have made themselves masters, with an armed force, of the committee-room of General Safety."—"We are ready to die," exclaimed the members. Animated by sublime resolution, every one spontaneously resumed his seat, and the Assembly unanimously took the oath. At this moment Goupilleau entered, and announced that Henriot had been brought to the neighbourhood in triumph, and was at the head of the armed force at their gates. An universal shudder upon this ran through the Convention. The vociferous crowd in the gallery at the same time disappeared.¹

In this extremity, Tallien and his friends acted with the firmness which in revolutions so often proves successful. "Everything conspires," said they, "to assure the triumph of the Convention and the liberty of France. By his revolt, Robespierre has opened to us the only path which is safe with tyrants. Thank Heaven, to deliver our country, we need not now await the uncertain decision of a tribunal filled with his creatures! He has brought his fate upon himself; let us declare him *hors la loi* with all his accomplices; let us include the rebellious municipality in the decree; let us besiege him in the centre of his power; let us instantly convoke the sections, and allow the public horror to manifest itself by actions. Name a commander of the armed force; there must be no hesitation; in such a strife, he who assumes the offensive commands success." All these decrees were instantly passed. Henriot was declared *hors la loi*, and Barras named to the command of the military force; Fréron, Bourdon de l'Oise, Rovère, Leonard Bourdon, and other determined men, being associated with him in the perilous duty. The Committee of Public Salvation, as the other committee-room was lost, was now fixed on as the centre of operations. The *générale* beat, and

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¹ Hist. Parl. xxxiv. 63, 65. Lac. xi. 112. Th. vi. 446, 447. Toul. iv. 380, 383, 386. Hist. de la Conv. iv. 179. Moniteur, 29 Juillet, p. 1276.

76.

Firmness of Tallien and his party.

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emissaries were instantly despatched to all the sections, to summon them to the defence of the Convention ; while a macer was sent to summon the municipality to its bar. But such was the arrogance of that body, in the anticipation of immediate victory, that they returned for answer—" Yes, we shall come to their bar, but at the head of the insurgent people."—" I invite," said Tallien, who had now taken the chair, " our friends to set out with the armed force. Let not the sun set before the heads of the conspirators have fallen."—" The moments are precious," said Billaud Varennes ; " when you are on a volcano, you must act. Robespierre has just said, that before two hours had elapsed, he would march on the Convention. Shall we sleep ? It is for us to anticipate him, and our enemies will be annihilated." Amidst loud shouts the commanders of the armed force set out on their perilous mission, to summon the national guard.¹

¹ *Moniteur*, 29 Juillet, p. 1276. *Journ. de la Mont.* No. 93, vol. v. p. 756. *Toul.* iv. 387. *Th.* vi. 447, 448. *Lac.* xi. 112, 113. *Hist. de la Conv.* iv. 177. *Hist. Parl.* xxxiv. 72, 74.

77.

The cannon-eers refuse to fire on the Convention. Dreadful agitation at Paris.

While the government was adopting these energetic measures, Henriot was haranguing the cannoneers in the Place du Carrousel. The fate of France hung on their decision ; could he have persuaded them to act, the Convention would have been destroyed before the tardy succours could arrive from the remoter quarters of the capital. Happily they could not be brought to fire on the legislature, and their refusal decided the fortune of the day. Dispirited at this unwonted failure with the troops, and alarmed at the cries which broke from the multitude as soon as the decrees of the Convention were known, he withdrew to the Hôtel de Ville ; the armed force followed his example, and the Convention, so recently besieged within its walls, speedily became the assailing party. Paris was soon in the most violent state of agitation. The tocsin summoned the citizens to the Hôtel de Ville, the *générale* called them to the Convention ; the deputies of the legislature, and the commissioners of the municipality, met in the sections, and strove for the mastery of those important bodies.² On all sides the

² *Deux Amis*, xii. 402, 404. *Hist. Parl.* xxxiii. 73, 75. *Lac.* xi. 113, 115. *Toul.* iv. 388. *Th.* vi. 448.

people hastened to arms ; the streets were filled by multitudes crowding to their different rallying-points ; cries of *Vive la Convention ! Vive la Commune !* broke forth in the different columns, according to the prevailing opinion of their members ; while the rolling of cannon and ammunition-waggons, by torchlight, gave a fearful presage of the contest that was approaching.

The emissaries of the municipality first arrived at the rendezvous of the sections ; but the national guard, distracted and uncertain, hesitated to obey the summons of the magistrates. They could only be brought, in the first instance, to send deputations to the commune, to inquire into the state of affairs. Meanwhile, the news of Robespierre's arrest circulated with rapidity, and a ray of hope shot through the minds of numerous proscribed individuals who were in concealment in the city. With trembling steps they issued from their hiding-places, and, approaching the columns of their fellow-citizens, besought them to assist in dethroning the tyrant. The minds of many were already shaken, those of all in a state of uncertainty, when, at ten o'clock, the commissioners of the Convention arrived with the intelligence of its decrees, of the summons to assist it, of the appointment of a new commander-in-chief, and a rallying-point at the Hall of the Convention. Upon this they no longer hesitated ; the battalions of the national guard from all quarters marched towards the Convention, and defiled through the hall in the midst of the most enthusiastic applause. At midnight, above three thousand men had arrived. The forces, being deemed sufficient, were ordered to set out. A few battalions and pieces of artillery were left to guard the Convention, and the remainder of the national guard, under the command of Barras, marched at half-past twelve against the insurgents.¹ The night was dark, a feeble moonlight only shone through the gloom ; but the forced illumination of the houses supplied a vivid light, which shone on the troops, who in profound silence, and in ser-

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78.

The sections
join the Con-
vention.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxiv. 74,
75. Deux
Amis, xii.
404, 405.
Mig. ii. 343,
344. Lac.
xi. 114, 116.
Toul. iv.
389. Hist.
de la Conv.
iv. 189, 190.

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ried masses, marched from the Tuileries along the quays of the river towards the Hôtel de Ville, the headquarters of the insurgents.

79.

The tumult
is heard in
the prisons.

The armed citizens, who had come to the Tuileries to take part with Henriot and the commune, dismayed by their retreat to the Hôtel de Ville, now glided into the ranks of the attacking force, and the columns which marched down the quays towards the Place de Grève. Every one held his breath as they passed ; the intense interest of life or death almost choked respiration. But in more distant quarters the agitation was more open ; and a confused sound, like the rolling of distant thunder, was heard in all parts of the city. By degrees the tumult became so violent, that at length the sound reached the prisons. The unhappy inmates of the gloomy cells put their ears to the bars of the windows, listened to every sound, and yet trembled lest the agitation should be the prelude to a general massacre of the captives. Soon, however, the downcast looks of the jailors, words whispered to the framers of the lists, and the consternation of these wretches, awoke hope in their despairing minds. Shortly after it was discovered, by half-suppressed words heard in the streets, that Robespierre was in danger ; the relations of the captives placed themselves under the windows, and informed them by signs of what was passing, and then the exhilaration of the prisoners broke out into the most vehement and tumultuous joy.¹

1 Deux
Amis, xii.
404. Th. vi.
450, 451.
Mém. de
Josephine,
par Cresset,
i. 252, 253.

80.

Prepara-
tions at the
Hôtel de
Ville.

Meanwhile, the adherents of Robespierre, consisting almost entirely of the cannoneers, and of the armed force commanded by Henriot, who were composed of the very lowest of the rabble, had assembled in great force at the Hôtel de Ville. The Place de Grève, in which it stands, was filled with artillery, bayonets, and pikes ; Robespierre had been received with the utmost enthusiasm, and the delivery of Henriot raised to the highest pitch the confidence of the conspirators. But as the night advanced, and no

columns of the national guard arrived, this confidence gave place to the most sinister presentiments. Even in the Faubourg St Antoine, the centre of all former insurrections, the delegates of the municipality failed in rousing the populace. "What the better have we been," said they, "of all the insurrections? What has Robespierre done for us? Where are the riches, the fields he promised us? When we are dying of famine, does he expect to satisfy us by the daily spectacle of a hundred aristocrats dying on the scaffold? Does he suppose we are cannibals, to feed on human flesh, and drink human blood? He has done nothing for us; we will do nothing for him." Such was the language of the populace in the most revolutionary quarter of Paris: the fever of innovation had exhausted itself; even the lowest of the people were horror-struck with the rulers they had chosen for themselves.¹

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¹ Deux
Amis, xii.
404, 405.
Lac. xi. 114,
115. Mig. ii.
344. Toul.
iv. 389.

At midnight the rumour began loudly to spread through the ranks of the insurgents, that the municipality had been declared *hors la loi*, that the sections had joined the Convention, and that their forces were advancing against the insurgents. To obviate its impression, Payan read aloud in the council-room the decree of the Convention, and inserted in it the names of all those of their party whom he observed in the gallery, hoping thereby to attach them from desperation to the cause of Robespierre. But an opposite effect immediately ensued, as they all instantly took to flight, leaving the gallery deserted. Nor did affairs wear a more promising aspect out of doors. There were about two thousand men stationed in the Place de Grève, with a powerful train of artillery. But their resolution was already much shaken by the obvious defection of their fellow-citizens, when the light of the torches showed the heads of the columns of the national guard appearing in all the avenues which led to the square. The moment was terrible: ten pieces of the artillery of the Convention stood in battery, while

81.
The cannon-
eers desert
Robespierre.

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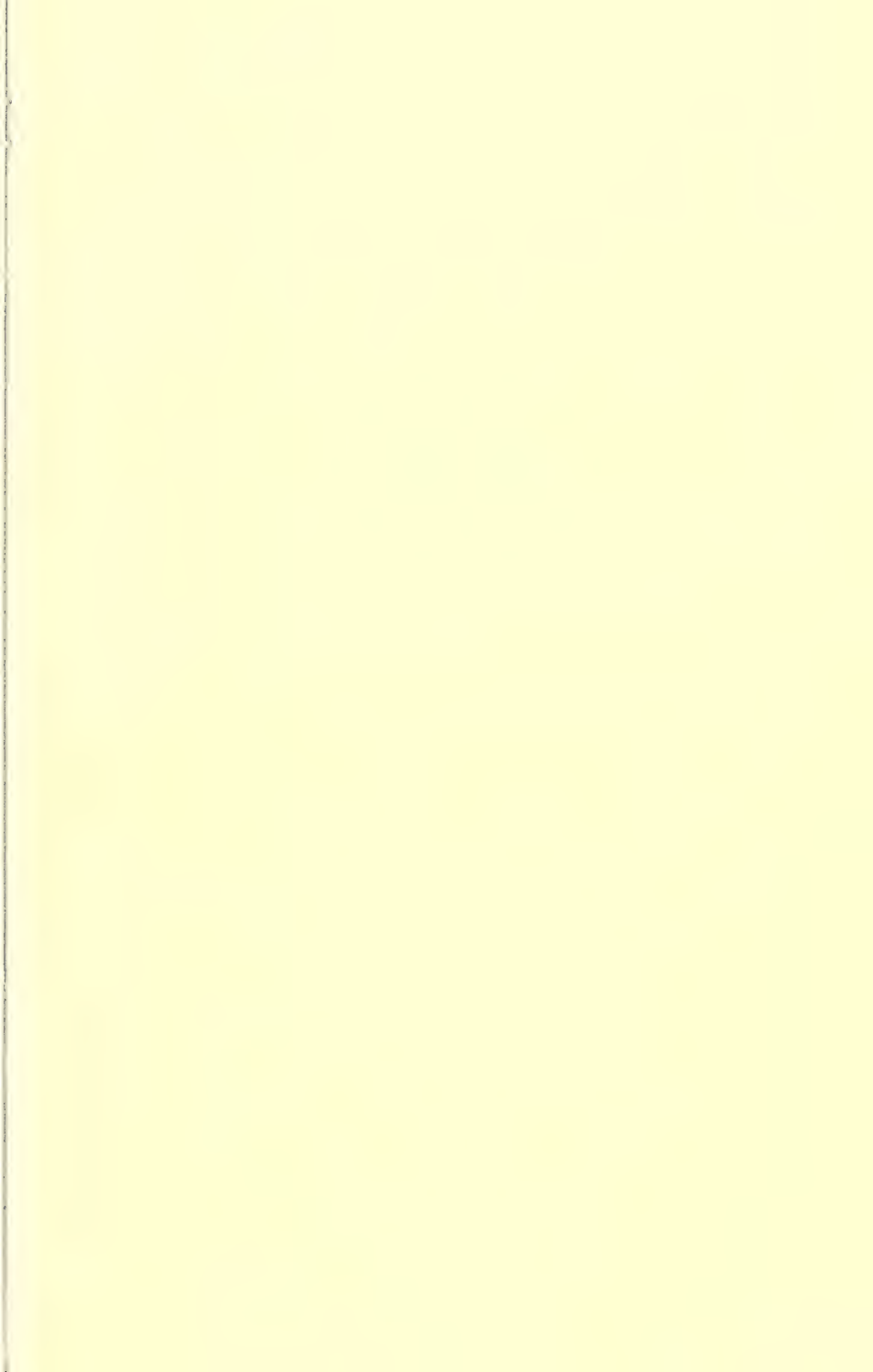
¹ Meda sur le 9 Thermidor. Rév. Mém. xlii. 383. Deux Amis, xii. 4, 5. Th. vi. 482. Mig. ii. 344. Hist. de la Conv. xv. 193.

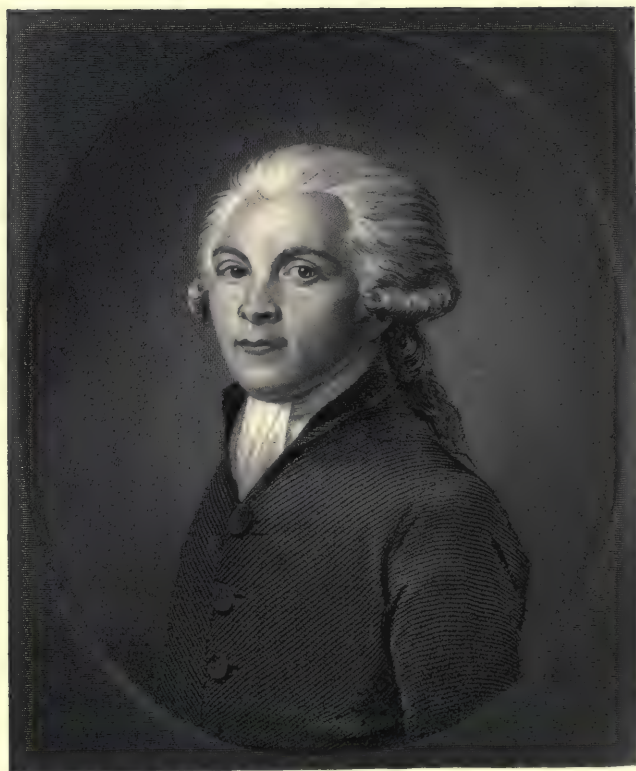
the cannoneers of the municipality, with their lighted matches in their hands, were posted beside their guns on the opposite side. But the authority of the law prevailed ; the decree of the legislature was read by torchlight, and the insurgent troops refused to resist it. Some emissaries of the Convention glided into the ranks of the municipality, and raised the cry, *Vive la Convention !* the insurgents were moved by the harangue of Meda, the commander of the national artillery, and in a short time the Place de Grève was deserted, and the whole cannon-eers retired to their homes, or ranged themselves on the side of the Assembly.¹

82.
Arrest of Robespierre and all his party.

Henriot descended the stair of the Hôtel de Ville ; but seeing the square deserted, he vented his execrations on his faithless followers, who had for the most part abandoned the King in the same manner on the 10th August, and hastened back to his comrades. The conspirators, finding themselves unsupported, gave way to despair ; the national guard rushed rapidly up the stair, headed by Bourdon de l'Oise, with a pistol in each hand and a naked sabre in his teeth, and entered the room where Robespierre and the leaders of the revolt were assembled. Lebas, hearing the tumult approaching, presented a pistol to Robespierre, entreating him to blow out his brains ; but he refused. When they entered, they found Robespierre sitting with his elbow on his knees, and his head resting on his hand ; Meda discharged his pistol, which broke his under jaw, and he fell under the table. St Just implored Lebas to put an end to his life. " Coward, follow my example !" said he, and blew out his brains. Couthon was seized under a table, feebly attempting to strike with a knife, which he wanted the courage to plunge in his heart ; Coffinhal and the younger Robespierre threw themselves from the windows, and were seized in the inner court of the building.² Henriot had been thrown from the window by Coffinhal, before he threw himself out ; but, though bruised and mutilated, he contrived

² Lac. xi. 117. Mig. ii. 345. Th. vi. 454, 455. Meda, Rév. Mém. xlii. 386. Levasseur, iii. 154. Toul. iv. 390. Mém. de Berryer, i. 272. Lam. Hist. des Gir. viii. 363, 365.





to crawl into the entrance of a sewer, from whence he was dragged out by the troops of the Convention.*

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Robespierre and Couthon, being supposed to be dead, were dragged by the heels to the Quai Pelletier, where it was proposed to throw them into the river; but it being discovered, when light was brought, that they still breathed, they were stretched on a board, and carried to the Convention between one and two o'clock in the morning. The members having refused to admit them, they were conveyed to the Committee of General Safety, where Robespierre lay for nine hours stretched on a table in the *salle d'audience*, with his broken jaw still bleeding, and suffering alike under bodily pain, and the execrations and insults of those around him. During the whole time that this cruel torture lasted, he evinced a stoical apathy. Foam merely issued from his mouth, which the humanity of some around him led them to wipe off; but he grasped with convulsive energy the pistol which he had not had sufficient time, or wanted courage, to discharge. His face retained its habitual bilious tint, but mingled with the ashen hue of death. At six in the morning a surgeon was sent for, who found the left jaw broken: he took out two or three teeth which were crushed by the shot, bandaged the jaw, and placed beside him a glass of water, with which he occasionally washed away the blood which filled his mouth. As he lay extended on the table, numbers reviled and spat upon him, and, to their eternal disgrace, some of his former colleagues in the committees insulted him, while the

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83.

Dreadful
scene after
his seizure.

* Many authors affirm that Robespierre shot himself. That he had a pistol in his hand is certain; but Levasseur de la Sarthe and Meda, the gendarmes who arrested him, agree in stating that his jaw was broken by a shot fired by the last of these parties.—See LEVASSEUR, iii. 154; MEDA, 385. Lamartine, in his *Histoire des Girondins*, gives the same account:—"Leonard Bourdon saisit de la main droite le bras du gendarme Meda armé d'un pistolet: et indiquant de la main gauche celui qu'il fallait viser, il dirige le canon de l'arme sur Robespierre, et dit au gendarme—'C'est lui!' Le coup part—Robespierre tombe, la tête en avant, sur la table, tachant de son sang la proclamation qu'il n'a pas achevé de signer."—LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, viii. 364, 365.

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¹ Rapport, sur la Journée du 9 Thermidor, Pap. inédits trouv. chez Rob. ii. 71, 73.

² Hist. de la Conv. iv. 203. Levass. iii. 155. Deux Amis, xii. 407. Hist. Parl. xxxiv. 92, 93. Riouffe, Mém. xxiii. 70. Mig. ii. 345. Meda, Rév. Mém. xlii. 386. Th. vi. 456. Lac. xi. 118, 119. Lam. Hist. des Gir. viii. 369.

84.
Executed with St Just, Henriot, Couthon, and all their party.

clerks of the office pricked him with their penknives.^{1*} At length he arose and sat down on a chair; he then gazed around him, fixing his eyes chiefly on the clerks in the office, whom he recognised. But he exhibited great fortitude, especially in the dressing of the wound, which occasioned acute pain. Shortly after, he was sent to the Conciergerie, where he was confined in the same cell which had been occupied by Danton, Hébert, and Chaumette. From thence he was brought, with all his associates, to the Revolutionary Tribunal, and, as soon as the identity of their persons was established, they were condemned. St Just and Dumas were taken direct to the Audience-Hall, at the office of the Committee of Public Salvation, and thence to the same prison. The former gazed at the great picture of the Rights of Man placed there, and said, "It is I, nevertheless, who did that." In entering the Conciergerie, St Just met General Hoche, who had been confined there for some weeks by St Just himself. Instead of insulting his fallen enemy, Hoche pressed his hand, and stood aside to let him pass. The really heroic are never on great occasions unworthy of themselves.²

At four in the afternoon of the 29th July, all Paris was in motion to witness the death of the tyrant. He was placed on the chariot, between Henriot and Couthon, whose persons were as mutilated as his own, the last in the vehicle, in order that, with the usual barbarity of the period, which he himself had been instrumental in introducing, he should see all his friends perish before him. They were bound by ropes to the benches of the car in which they were seated; and the rolling of the vehicle during the long passage, which was through the most populous quarters of Paris, produced such pain in their wounds, that they at times screamed aloud. The gen-

* "Ses collègues des comités vinrent l'insulter, le frapper, lui cracher au visage; des commis de bureau le piquèrent de leurs canifs."—*Derniers Moments de Robespierre*; Hist. Parl. xxxiv. 94.

darmes rode with their sabres presented to the people, who clapped their hands, as they had done when Danton was led to execution. Robespierre's forehead, one eye, and part of the cheek, were alone seen above the bandage which bound up the broken jaw. St Just evinced throughout the most unconquerable fortitude. Robespierre cast his eyes on the crowd, turned them aside, and shrugged his shoulders. The multitude, which for long had ceased to attend the executions, manifested the utmost joy at their fate. They were conducted to the Place de la Révolution; the scaffold was placed on the spot where Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette had suffered. The statue of Liberty still surmounted the scene. Never had such a crowd been witnessed on any former occasion: the streets, despite the earliness of the hour, were thronged to excess; every window was filled; even the roofs of the houses, like the manned yards of a ship, were crowded with spectators. The joy was universal; it almost approached to delirium. The blood from Robespierre's jaw burst through the bandage, and overflowed his dress; his face was ghastly pale. He kept his eyes shut, when he saw the general feeling, during the time the procession lasted, but could not close his ears against the imprecations of the multitude. A woman, breaking from the crowd, exclaimed—"Murderer of all my kindred! your agony fills me with joy: descend to hell covered with the curses of every mother in France!" He ascended the scaffold with a firm step, and was laid down near the axe. Twenty of his comrades were executed before him; during the time they were suffering, he lay on the scaffold with his eyes shut, never uttering a word. When lifted up to be tied to the fatal plank, the executioner tore the bandage from his face; the lower jaw fell upon his breast, and he uttered a yell which filled every heart with horror. For some minutes the frightful figure was held up, fixed to the board, to the multitude;¹ he was then placed under the axe, and the last sounds which reached

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¹ Deux
Amis, xii.
408, 409.
Mig. ii. 346.
Hist. de la
Conv. iv.
213. Toul.
iv. 391.
Th. vi. 457.
Lac. xi. 120.
Levasseur,
iii. 184, 187.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. viii.
370, 374.

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85.

Transports
of the pub-
lic, and exe-
cution of
the rest of
his party.

his ears were the exulting shouts, which were prolonged for some minutes after his death.

Along with Robespierre were executed Henriot, Couthon, St Just, Dumas, Coffinhal, Simon, and all the leaders of the revolt. Of these, St Just alone displayed the firmness which had so often been witnessed among the victims whom they had sent to the scaffold. Couthon wept with terror: the others died uttering blasphemies, which were drowned by the cheers of the people. The spectators shed tears for joy, they embraced each other in transport, they crowded round the scaffold to behold the bloody remains of the tyrants. "Yes, Robespierre! there is a God!" said a poor man, as he approached the lifeless body of one so lately the object of dread. His fall was felt by all present as an immediate manifestation of the Divinity. Seventy-three of his party were executed next day, comprising all the leaders of the revolt at the municipality; but Barère, Billaud Varennes, and Collot d'Herbois, were in the ranks of the victorious party, and, though the worst of the whole, suffered at that time no punishment for their crimes. The whole theatres of Paris were open as usual during these scenes of horror, as they had been during the whole continuance of the Reign of Terror.¹*

Thus terminated the Reign of Terror—"the only series

* Theatres open on the 9th Thermidor, viz. :—

1. Opéra. Armide, avec le ballet de Télémaque.
2. Opéra Comique. La Mélomanie.
3. Théâtre de la République. La Conspiration pour la Liberté.
4. Théâtre Feydeau. Roméo et Juliette.
5. Théâtre de l'Egalité, Section Marat. Guillaume Tell.
6. Théâtre de la Montagne. Jardin de l'Egalité.
7. Théâtre des Sans-culottes. Ci-devant Molière.
8. Théâtre Lyrique des Amis de la Patrie. La Revoir.
9. Théâtre du Vaudeville. Fête de l'Egalité.
10. Théâtre de la Cité. Le Combat des Thermopyles.
11. Théâtre du Lycée des Arts. Jardin de l'Egalité.
12. Amphithéâtre d'Astley, Faubourg du Temple. La Fête Civique.

Immediately before this is a list of forty-five persons executed the same day. It is the same throughout the whole of the Reign of Terror.—See *Moniteur*, 27th July 1794 (9 Thermidor).

¹ Lac. xi.
120. Th.
vi. 457.
Moniteur,
Aug. 24,
p. 1380.

of crimes," says Sir James Mackintosh, "perhaps, in history, which, in spite of the common disposition to exaggerate extraordinary facts, has been beyond measure *under-rated* in public opinion." * It is an epoch fraught with greater political instruction than any of equal duration which has existed since the beginning of the world. In no former period had the efforts of the people so completely triumphed, or the higher orders been so thoroughly crushed by the lower. The throne had been overturned, the altar destroyed, the aristocracy levelled with the dust; the nobles were in exile, the clergy in captivity, the gentry in affliction. A merciless sword had waved over the state, destroying alike the dignity of rank, the splendour of talent, and the graces of beauty. All that excelled the labouring classes in situation, fortune, or acquirement, had been removed; they had triumphed over their oppressors, seized their possessions, and risen into their stations. And what was the consequence? The establishment of a more cruel and revolting tyranny than any which mankind had yet witnessed; the destruction of all the charities and enjoyments of life; the dreadful spectacle of streams of blood flowing through every part of France. With truth did the warmest apologists and ablest advocates of the Revolution now admit that it had produced "*the most indefatigable, searching, multiform, and omnipresent tyranny that ever existed*, which pervaded every class of society, which had ministers and victims in every village of France." † The earliest friends, the warmest advocates, the firmest supporters of the people, were swept off indiscriminately with their bitterest enemies; in the unequal struggle, virtue and philanthropy sank under ambition and violence; and society returned to a state of chaos, when all the elements of private or public happiness were scattered to the winds. Such are the results of unchaining the passions of the

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86.

Reflections
on the Reign
of Terror,
with the
prodigious
number of
its victims.* MACKINTOSH, *Works*, iii. 295.† Sir JAMES MACKINTOSH (Author of the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*), *Works*, iii. 263.

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multitude ; such the peril of suddenly admitting the light upon a benighted people, *

——— “ The will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left them at large to their own dark designs,
That with reiterated crimes they might
Heap on themselves damnation, whilst they sought
Evil to others, and, enraged, might see
How all their malice served but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy shown
On man by them seduced ; but on themselves
Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance poured.”

Paradise Lost, i. 212.

The facility with which a faction, composed of a

* The extent to which blood was shed in France during this melancholy period will hardly be credited by future ages. The Republican Prudhomme, whose prepossessions led him to anything rather than exaggeration of the horrors of the popular rule, has given the following appalling account of the victims of the Revolution. Its value will not be duly appreciated unless it is recollected that the author who compiled it was an ardent supporter of the Revolution—an intimate friend and political agent of Danton's ; and that, in his well-known revolutionary journal, the “ *Révolutions de Paris*,” he had *justified* the massacres in the prisons in September 1792. See No., September 10, 1792.

CONVENTION NATIONALE.

	Morts.
Du 21 Septembre 1792 au 25 Octobre 1795, ou ère republicaine, ann. 3.	
Individus guillotinés,	18,613
{ Ci-devant nobles,	1278
{ Femmes, <i>idem</i> ,	760
Dont, { Religieuses,	360
{ Prêtres,	1135
{ Femmes d'artisans,	1467
Individus périés dans la guerre intestine, suite de la journée du 31 Mai 1793 (à Lyon),	31,200
LYON.	
Morts de frayeur et par la famine pendant le siège,	184
Périés par les démolitions,	45
Femmes enceintes et en couche,	348
Egorgés après la réaction du 9 Thermidor,	145
Morts en prison,	32
Suicidés,	45
Maisons démolies, 1674.	
Total, ———	799
MARSEILLE.	
Combat de Carteaux, en route pour Marseille,	650
Morts en prison,	79
Total, ———	729
Carry forward,	51,341

few of the most audacious and reckless of the nation, triumphed over the immense majority of all the holders of property in the kingdom, and led them forth like victims to the sacrifice, is not the least extraordinary or memorable fact of that eventful period. The active part of the bloody faction at Paris never exceeded a few thousand men ; their talents were by no means of the highest order, nor their weight in society considerable ; yet they trampled under foot all the influential classes, ruled mighty armies with absolute sway, kept two hundred thousand of their fellow-citizens in

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87.

Ease with
which these
massacres
were per-
petrated.

	Brought over,	Morts. 51,341
TOULON.		
Pendant le siège,	9000	
Egorgés ou noyés à la fuite des Anglais,	3100	
Morts en prison,	160	
Fusillés,	800	
Femmes et enfans tombés à la mer,	1265	
Total, ———		14,325
BÉDOIN.		
Destruction et dispersion des habitans de cette ville, dont le nombre des maisons se porte à plus de, 1600		
MIDI.		
Individus égorgés dans tout le Midi, après la réaction du 9 Thermidor,		750
Conspirations,		360
Insurrections,		140
GUERRE DE LA VENDEE.		
En rapprochant les massacres, égorgemens, fusillades, noyades, et les morts dans les différens combats, <i>entre</i> <i>Français</i> , la perte s'évalue à peu près au nombre de (individus),		900,000
Dont, { Femmes,	15,000	
{ Enfans,	22,000	
Cette guerre a fait disparaître, soit villages, hameaux, métairies, ou fermes, plus de,	20,000	
VICTIMES sous le proconsulat de CARRIER, à Nantes,		32,000
Dont, { Enfans fusillés,	500	
{ <i>Idem</i> , noyés,	1500	
{ Femmes fusillées,	264	
{ <i>Idem</i> , noyées,	500	
{ Prêtres fusillés,	300	
{ <i>Idem</i> , noyés,	460	
{ Nobles, <i>idem</i> ,	1400	
{ Artisans, <i>idem</i> ,	5300	
{ Individus morts en prison par la peste,	8000	

Carry forward,

998,916

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captivity, and daily led out several hundred, and at last, perhaps, taking the whole country together, some thousand persons, of the best blood in France, to execution. Such is the effect of the unity of action which atrocious wickedness produces; such the consequence of rousing the cupidity of the lower orders; such the ascendancy which, in periods of anarchy, is acquired by the most savage and lawless of the people. The peaceable and inoffensive citizens lived and wept in silence; terror crushed every attempt at combination; the extremity of grief subdued even the firmest hearts. "Isque habitus animorum fuit, ut pessimum facinus auderent pauci, plures vellent, omnes paterentur."* In despair at effecting any alleviation of the general sufferings, apathy universally prevailed, the most sacred domestic ties were often for-

	Morts.
Brought over,	998,916
<i>Nota.</i> —Les individus guillotiné à Lyon, Marseille, Toulon, et Bédoin, se trouvent compris dans la masse ci-dessus, de 18,613.	
INDIVIDUS qui se sont suicidés, pendus noyés, ou jetés,	
par les fenêtres, par suite de la terreur, . . .	4,790
Femmes mortes par suite de couches prématurées, . . .	3,400
Morts par la famine, . . .	20,000
Individus devenus fous par la Révolution, 1550, . . .	
En tout,	1,027,106 ¹

In this enumeration are not comprehended the massacres at Versailles, at the Abbaye, the Carmes, or other prisons, on September 2d, the victims of the Glacière of Avignon, those shot at Toulon and Marseilles, or the persons slain in the little town of Bédoin, of which the whole population perished. Those contained in the "*Liste des Condamnés*," a very curious work, down to the 12th Thermidor (30th July 1794), are 2741. See *Supplément à No. IX. Liste des Condamnés*, p. 15.—The additional 99 contained in the *Moniteur* are those condemned and executed after the fall of Robespierre, and are also in the *Liste des Condamnés*, Nos. X. and XI.

It is in an especial manner remarkable, in this dismal catalogue, how large a proportion of the victims of the Revolution were persons in the middle and lower ranks of life. The priests and nobles guillotined are only 2413, while the persons of plebeian origin exceed 13,000! The nobles and priests put to death at Nantes were only 2160; while the infants drowned and shot are 2000, the women 764, and the artisans 5300! So rapidly in revolutionary convulsions does the career of cruelty reach the lower orders, and so wide-spread is the carnage dealt out to them, compared with that which they have sought to inflict on their superiors.

* "And this was the state of men's minds, that extreme wickedness was dared by a few, wished by many, endured by all."—TACITUS, *Hist.* i. 28.

¹ Prudhom.
Vict. de la
Rév. vol. vi.
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gotten, selfishness became general. The people sought to forget their sorrows in the delirium of present enjoyments; and the theatres were never fuller than during the whole duration of the Reign of Terror. Ignorance of human nature can alone lead us to ascribe this to any peculiarity in the French character; the same effects have been observed in all parts and ages of the world, as invariably attending a state of extreme and long-continued distress.¹*

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¹ Louvet,
124, 125.
Mercier,
Tableau de
Paris, and
Moniteur,
throughout.

How, then, did a faction, whose leaders were so extremely contemptible in point of numbers, obtain the power to rule France with such absolute sway? The answer is simple. It was by an expedient of the plainest kind, and by steadily following out one principle, so obvious that few have sought for the cause of such terrible phenomena in its application. This was by promoting, and, to a great extent, actually giving to the working-classes the influence and the possessions of all the other orders in the state. *Egestas cupida novarum rerum*,† was the maxim on which they acted: it was toward this point—the cupidity and ambition of those to whom fortune had proved adverse—that all their measures were directed. Their principle was to keep the revolutionary passions of the people constantly awake by the display of fresh objects of desire; to represent all the present misery

88.
Principle
which led to
the triumph
of the Revolution.

* Appearances precisely similar are recorded by Boccaccio to have been observed in Florence during the dreadful pestilence of 1348.—“L'uno cittadino l'altro schifasse, e quasi ninno vicino areasse dell'altro cura, e i parenti insieme rade volte, o non mai si vitassero, e di lontano, era con sì falto spavento questa tribulazione enbrata nè petti degli uomini e delle donne, che l'un fratello l'altro abandonao, e il zio il inpote, e la sorella il fratello, e spesse volte la donna il suo marito; e che maggior cosa è, e quasi incredibile, li padri, e le madri, e figlinoli, quasi loco non fossero, di visitare e di servire schifavane * * * Et quegli cotali, senza fare distinzione alcuna dalle cose oneste a quelle che oneste non sono, solo che l'appetito le chieggia, e soli et accompagnati, e di di è di notte quelle fare che piu di diletto lor porgono. E non che le solute persone, ma ancora le racchiuse ne monisteri, faccendosi a credere che quello a lor si convenga, e non si disdica, che all' altre rotte della obediienza le leggi, dadesi a' dilette carnali, in tal guisa avvisando scampare, son divenute lascive e dissolute.”—Boccaccio, *Giornata Prima Introduzione*. The same will appear amidst the horrors of the Moscow retreat.

† “Indigence covetous of change.”

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which the system of innovation had occasioned, as the consequence of the resistance which the holders of property had opposed to its progress ; and to dazzle the populace by the prospect of boundless felicity, when the revolutionary equality and spoliation for which they contended was fully established. By this means, they effectually secured, over the greater part of France, the co-operation of the multitude ; and it was by their physical strength, guided and called forth by the revolutionary clubs and committees universally established, and everywhere composed of the most ardent of the Jacobin faction, that the extraordinary power of the Terrorists was upheld.

89.
What long
supported,
and at length
terminated,
this dreadful
power.

In the later stages of the Revolution, this universally aroused cupidity of the working-classes was powerfully supported, and the strength of Jacobin vigour increased, by the terrors of punishment among the leaders of the populace for the innumerable crimes they had committed. This terror went to such a length as to be often ridiculous : for a few words, from a handful of children or old women, were often sufficient to make the leaders tremble who had defeated the armies of all Europe. This would be inexplicable did we not know that "conscience makes cowards of us all." These terrors and this system succeeded perfectly, as long as the victims of spoliation were the higher orders and considerable holders of property ; it was when they were exhausted, and the edge of the guillotine began to descend upon the shopkeepers and the more opulent of the labouring-classes, that the *general* reaction took place which overturned the Reign of Terror. When society is in so corrupt and profligate a form, that a faction, qualified by their talents and energy to take the lead in public affairs, can be found who will carry on the government on these principles, and they are not crushed in the outset by a united effort of all the holders of property, it can hardly fail of obtaining temporary success. It is well that the friends of order of every political persuasion—

and they are to be found as much among the supporters of rational freedom as the advocates of monarchical power—should be aware of the deadly weapon which is in the possession of their adversaries, and the necessity of uniting to wrest it from their hands the moment that it is unsheathed. And it would be fortunate if the agents of revolution would contemplate, in the Reign of Terror and the fate of Robespierre, the inevitable effects of using it to their country and themselves.

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In contemplating the progress of the Revolution, nothing appears more extraordinary than the universal and rapid destruction which it brought upon all ranks who aided it, from the throne to the cottage. The king supported it and perished; the nobles supported it and perished; the clergy supported it and perished; the merchants supported it and perished; the public creditors supported it and perished; the shopkeepers supported it and perished; the artisans supported it and perished; the peasants supported it and perished. The nobles, whose passion for innovation, and misguided declamations in favour of equality, had first led to the convocation of the States-General, who early set the example of submission to the popular will, and voluntarily abdicated their titles, their privileges, and their rights, to place themselves at the head of the movement, were the first to be destroyed. Decimated by the guillotine, exiles from their country, destitute wanderers in foreign lands, they beheld their estates confiscated, their palaces sold, their children proscribed, themselves undone. While by the waters of Babylon they sat down and wept, they learned to lament the fatal precipitance with which they had excited the ambition of their inferiors, by yielding so precipitately to the public frenzy in favour of democracy.

90.
Universal
destruction
by the Revo-
lution of all
its suppor-
ters.

The clergy, who had proved themselves the earliest and steadiest friends of freedom, whose junction with the Tiers Etat in the hour of peril had first given the latter a superiority over the privileged classes, and compelled the

91.
Of the clergy
and com-
mercial
classes.

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ruinous union of all the orders in one chamber, were utterly destroyed by the party whom they had cherished. Their religion was abolished, their churches were closed, their property was confiscated, themselves were subjected to cruel and tyrannical enactments, compelled to wander in utter destitution in foreign lands, or purchase a miserable pittance by violating their oaths, and earning the contempt of all the faithful among their flocks. The commercial classes, whose jealousy of the unjust privileges of the noblesse had first fostered the flame of liberty, were consumed in the conflagration which it had raised ; the once flourishing colonies of the monarchy were in flames, its manufacturing cities in ruins, its private wealth destroyed, its sails banished from the ocean, its naval establishments in decay. Blasted by a ruinous system of paper currency, and crushed in the grasp of a relentless despotism, manufacturing industry was withered, and commercial capital annihilated. The public creditors, once so loud in their praises of the first movements of the Revolution, whose enthusiasm had raised the public funds thirty per cent in one day, when Necker was restored to power, in 1788, on the shoulders of the democracy, were now crushed beneath its wheels ; the once opulent capitalists, ruined by the fall of the public securities, deprived of their property by a fictitious paper, paid by their debtors in a nominal currency, had long since sunk to the dust ; while the miserable *rentiers*, cheated out of almost all their income by the payment of their annuities in assignats, were wandering about in utter despair, supporting a miserable existence by charity, or terminating it by suicide.

92.
Of the
middle and
working
classes.

The shopkeepers, whose unanimous shouts had so long supported the Constituent Assembly, whose bayonets had first upheld the fortunes of the Revolution, at last tasted its bitter fruits. As its movement advanced, and they became the objects of jealousy to still lower ambition, the fury of plebeian revenge was directed against their ranks ;

insensibly they melted away under the axe of the guillotine, or were destroyed by the law of the maximum, and lamented with unavailing tears the convulsions which had deprived them at once of the purchasers of their commodities, the security for their property, and the disposal of their industry. The artisans, who had expected a flood of prosperity from the regeneration of society, whose pikes had so often, at Jacobin command, issued from the Faubourgs to overawe the legislature, were speedily steeped in misery from the consequences of their actions. Impatient of restraint, unable to endure a superior, they were at last subjected to the most galling bondage. Destitute of employment, fed only by the bounty of government, they were fettered in every action of their lives. Debarred the power of purchasing even the necessities of life for themselves, they were forced first to wait half the day as needy suppliants at the offices of the committees who issued their tickets, and then to watch half the night round the bakers' shops, to procure the wretched pittance of a pound of black bread a-day for each member of their families. The peasants expected an immediate deliverance from tithes, taxes, and burdens of every description, as the consequence of their emancipation; and they found themselves ground down by the law of the maximum, forced to sell at nominal prices to the purveyors for the armies, and fettered in every action of their lives by oppressive regulations. They saw their sons perish in the field, or rot in the hospitals, their horses and cattle seized for the forced requisitions, and the produce of their labour torn from them by battalions of armed men, to maintain an indigent and worthless rabble in the great cities of the Republic.

Consequences so extraordinary, so unlooked for, to every class of society, from the throne to the cottage, are singularly instructive as to the effects of revolutions; but yet, if the matter be considered dispassionately, it is evident that they must in every age attend any considerable convulsion in society. When a tree is felled, it is

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93.

All this
necessarily
results from
the develop-
ment of the
revolution-
ary passion.

the leaves and the extremities which first begin to wither, because they are soonest affected by a stoppage in the supplies by which the whole is nourished. It is the same with society. Upon the occurrence of a revolution, the working-classes are the earliest to suffer, because they have no stock to maintain themselves during a period of adversity, and being wholly dependent on the daily wages of labour, are the first victims of the catastrophe which has interrupted it. It is this immediate effect of a revolution, in spreading misery through the labouring poor, which in the general case renders its march irresistible, when not arrested in the outset by a firm combination of all the holders of property. It is it which precipitates society into a series of convulsions, from which it can hardly emerge without the destruction of the existing generation. The shock given to credit, the stoppage to speculation, the contraction to expenditure, is so excessive, that the lower orders are immediately involved in distress ; and the same causes which increase their discontent, and augment their disposition to revolt, disable government, by the rapid fall of the revenue, either from administering relief or exerting force. The consequence is, that fresh insurrections take place ; more extravagant and levelling doctrines become popular ; a lower but more energetic class rises to the head of affairs ; desperate measures of finance are adopted, the public expenditure is increased, while the national income is diminished ; and, after a succession of vain attempts to avoid the catastrophe, national bankruptcy takes place, and the accumulations of ages are swept off in a general public and private insolvency. “*Nemo unquam imperium flagitio quæsitum bonis artibus exercuit.*” *

The different steps of this disastrous but unavoidable progress are clearly marked in the successive stages of the French Revolution. Within six months after the Revolution broke out, it was discovered that the revenue had

* “No one ever applied power acquired by wickedness to good purposes.”—TACITUS.

fallen, in consequence of the general uncertainty of the future, from £24,000,000 a-year to £17,000,000, and that at the very time when the embarrassment of the finances had been the principal cause of the convocation of the States-General. No resource could be found to meet the pressing difficulties of the exchequer but the confiscation of the property of the church, and subsequently of that of the emigrant nobles. These measures again engendered evils which tended to perpetuate the difficulties from which they sprang. The confiscation of the church property rendered necessary the laws against the refractory priests, and they, in their turn, produced the refusal of so many of the clergy to take the oaths to the Constitution, and thereby lighted the flames of civil war in La Vendée. At the same time, the severe enactments against the emigrant nobles produced a war of life and death with the aristocratic monarchs in Europe. Pressed by civil war within, and by the forces of Europe without, the Convention found themselves compelled to have recourse to the system of assignats, and carried on the enormous expenditure of a hundred and seventy millions sterling a-year, by dispensing with a prodigal hand the confiscated wealth of more than half of France. This prodigious issue of paper necessarily led to its rapid depreciation ; all obligations of debt and credit were overturned by the necessity of accepting payment in a nominal currency ; the rapid rise in the price of provisions compelled the government to adopt a maximum, and interfere with the arm of force in the management of public subsistence. Thence the forced requisitions, the compulsory sales, the distribution of rations, and all the innumerable tyrannical regulations which fettered industry in every department ; and at length, by exciting the passions of the people against each other, brought down even to the humblest class the horrors which they had originally inflicted on their superiors.

Such a survey of the consequences of human violence both vindicates the justice of Providence, by demonstrating

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94.
Successive
steps of its
disastrous
progress.

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95.

Manner in
which the
public mind
is corrupted
during a
revolution.

how rapidly and unavoidably the guilt of every class in society brings upon itself its own punishment, and tends to make us judge charitably of the conduct of men placed in such a terrible crisis of society. Harshly as we may think of the atrocities of the Revolution, let no man be sure that, placed in similar circumstances, he would not have been betrayed into the same excesses. It is the insensible gradation in violence, the experienced necessity of advancing with the tide, which renders such convulsions so perilous to the morals as well as the welfare of nations. The authors of many of the worst measures in the Revolution were restored to private life as innocent and inoffensive as other men ; the most atrocious violations of right had been so long foreseen and discussed, that their occurrence produced little or no sensation. "Of all the lessons derived from the history of human passion," says Lavalette, "the most important is the utter impossibility which the best men will always experience of stopping, if they are once led into the path of error. If, a few years before they were perpetrated, the crimes of the Revolution could have been portrayed to those who afterwards committed them, even Robespierre himself would have recoiled with horror. Men are seduced, in the first instance, by plausible theories ; their heated imaginations represent them as beneficial, and easy of execution ; they advance unconsciously from errors to faults, and from faults to crimes, till sensibility is destroyed by the spectacle of guilt, and the most savage atrocities are dignified by the name of state policy."¹ Such always will be the case ; it is the pressure of external circumstances which ultimately produces guilt, as much as guilt which at first induces the difficulties of public affairs. The leaders of a revolution are constantly advancing before the fire which they themselves have lighted ; the moment they stop, they are consumed in the flames.

¹ Lavalette,
i. 178.

One circumstance is manifest from the whole history of the Revolution, upon which it well becomes the people of

this country to ponder, if they shall find themselves involved in a similar convulsion ; that is, that by far the greatest and most atrocious crimes committed in its progress were perpetrated by *jurymen*. The whole victims of the revolutionary tribunal at Paris, 2800 in number, were judicially murdered by the *verdicts of juries*. The same was the case with almost all the other revolutionary tribunals in France. In England, all the atrocities of Jefferies, which had so powerful an effect in bringing about the Revolution of 1688, were effected by the same means. The monarchical cruelties which occasioned the English, the democratic atrocities which disgraced the French Revolution, found equally ready instruments in the passions or pliability of jurymen.* This fact is not a little remarkable. It demonstrates how extremely fallacious is the reliance which is generally placed on the institution of jury-trial, as at all times the bulwark of freedom and the shield of oppressed innocence. That it has often proved so in former times, when power was wielded by monarchs or aristocratic bodies, and juries were taken from the middle or lower classes, is certain. But what ensues when the lower orders themselves are the oppressors, and the sword of power is wielded by those whom they have placed in the seats of justice ? Will they permit the accused aristocrats to be tried by their peers, as was the case with themselves when the nobles were in power ? Unquestionably they will not ; the first thing they invariably do is, to place the most violent of their own class and faction upon the lists of jurymen. Juries then become what Tocqueville says they are in America, nothing better than the judicial committee of the majority. Actuated by its passions, inflamed by its fears, envenomed by its jealousies, they are then more dangerous to real liberty, and perpetrate injustice on a greater scale, than permanent

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96.

Inefficacy of
juries as a
check on re-
volutionary
crimes.

* "All the acts of Jefferies were done *with* the aid of juries, and *without* the censure of Parliament. They afford a fatal proof that judicial forms and constitutional establishments may be rendered unavailing by the subserviency or prejudice of those who are appointed to carry them into effect."—SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH'S *Works*, ii. 41.

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judges ever could venture to do ; for, in their case, numbers remove responsibility without lessening cruelty, and obscurity shelters crime without fostering virtue. In democratic times, the deepest wounds to the cause of freedom will in general be inflicted by the hands of jurymen.

97.

Robespierre
was the in-
carnation of
the Revolution
in internal
government.

Robespierre was to the internal march of the Revolution what Napoleon was to its external passions. Both rose to eminence, and were sustained in power by surrendering themselves to the all-powerful current of public passion, and directing it to the objects which the ambition of the great bulk of men at the time most ardently desired. Both owed the long continuance of their power to the opinion generally and deservedly entertained, that they were sincere in their enthusiasm, disinterested in their intentions, and invincible in their hearts. The dreadful catastrophes to which the rule of both led are to be regarded as the result, not so much of their individual actions, as of the false, and, in their ultimate consequences, terrible principles on which they proceeded. The maxim of Robespierre and St Just, that what constituted a republic was the destruction of everything that opposed it, was precisely the principle which led Napoleon to his insatiable foreign conquests. Invincible necessity urged both on when they had launched on the career of crime ; and that necessity was, the moral law of nature which dooms outrageous sin to punishment from the consequences of the very acts which itself most ardently desires. The 9th Thermidor was the counterpart of the Moscow retreat. Instead, then, of regarding Robespierre as a mere individual man, and ascribing the horrors of his career to his wicked propensities, it is more consonant to historic justice, as well as the cause of virtue, to represent him as the INCARNATION IN CIVIL GOVERNMENT OF THE REVOLUTION. And probably no Avatar sent on such a mission could be imbued with fewer vices.

Extravagant as the opinions of Robespierre now appear, and dreadful as were the consequences to which they led,

there seems no reason to doubt that they were seriously entertained by him, and that, throughout his bloody career, he was actuated in the main by the desire of promoting, in the end, human felicity. Individual ambition, jealousy of rivals, envy of superiors, may have co-operated in prompting his actions ; but as his language was uniformly philanthropic, so his private disinterestedness never betrayed the influence of corrupt or mercenary motives. It was the total disregard of the means employed, the fatal error of supposing that the great body of mankind are innocent, and that the prevailing evils of society were all owing to the vices of a few, that was the cause of all the unspeakable misery he brought upon mankind. He was a stern and relentless fanatic of the school of Rousseau. He constantly hoped that, when he had destroyed the whole superior classes of society, general virtue would rise up on the foundation of restored equality ; he always expected to see the stream of human iniquity run out :—

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98.

Fundamen-
tal errors
of Robes-
pierre's
principles.

“ Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis ; at ille
Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.” *

Instead of this, he found, to his unspeakable horror, that the Republican authorities, whom his principles had created, were infinitely more corrupt and oppressive than the aristocratic or monarchical had been. He adventured on the attempt to destroy the unparalleled mass of iniquity which had risen to the direction of affairs under his own system of universal suffrage, and was crushed by its weight. Robespierre's career was thus not the offspring of any individual character : it was the result of the delusion of the age, and affords a *reductio ad absurdum* of its errors. And that delusion was the belief of the natural innocence of man : those errors, that it was lawful to do evil that good might come of it.

It is altogether a mistake, therefore, to represent the

* “ The rustic waits till the stream flows out ; but it
Flows, and, as it flows, for ever will flow on.”

HORACE.

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99.

Real cause
of the atro-
cities of the
Revolution.

atrocities of the Revolution as the work merely of the guilty men who were at its head. It is evident, from every page of its annals, that these men rose to eminence only because they were the representatives of its spirit, and resolutely determined to do its work. Equally with Napoleon, during his career of foreign conquest, Robespierre always marched with the opinions of five millions of men. It was the force of guilty passion, the thirst for illicit gratification, the passion for general destruction, which raised up his army of satellites, in the first case, as it was the desire of plunder, the thirst for elevation, the passion for glory, in the last. Robespierre had no private fortune, and made none in the Revolution; he died as poor as he lived. What, then, was the secret of his astonishing power? Nothing but the uniform and ardent support of the people, who justly regarded him as thoroughly identified with their supposed interests, and heart and soul actuated by their real passions. The Jacobin Club composed his janizaries, the revolutionary committees his regular forces. But these janizaries and these forces were themselves unarmed; their influence was entirely a moral one: they governed the armed force of the national guard, because they partook of its passions, and were identified with its objects. The whole standing army of France was congregated on the frontier during the Reign of Terror; fifteen hundred thousand national guards were in arms in the interior; when a few battalions of them at Paris spoke out, the tyranny was at end. Three thousand men in the Place de Grève overthrew and made prisoner the tyrant. The crimes of the Revolution, therefore, were not the exclusive deeds of any particular body of men; they were the work of the masses, and the guilt of them must be borne by the immense majority of the French nation. Their real cause is to be found in the overthrow of religion which Voltaire effected, the dreams of equality which Rousseau introduced.

There is no character, however, which has not some redeeming points ; pure unmixed wickedness is the creation of romance, but never yet appeared in real life.* Even the Jacobins of Paris were not destitute of good qualities ; history would deviate equally from its first duty, and its chief usefulness, if it did not bring them prominently forward. With the exception of some atrocious men, such as Collot d'Herbois, Fouché, Carrier, and a few others, who were villains as base as they were inhuman, almost entirely guided by selfish motives, they were, for the most part, possessed of some qualities in which the seeds of a noble character are to be found. In moral courage, energy of mind, and decision of conduct, they yielded to none in ancient or modern times : their heroic resolution to maintain, amidst unexampled perils, the independence of their country, was worthy of the best days of Roman patriotism. They possessed in the highest degree the quality so finely described by the poet :—

“The unconquerable will
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
With courage never to submit or yield,
And what is else not to be overcome.”

If this strenuous will could be separated from the obvious necessity of repelling the Allies to avoid punishment for the numberless crimes which they had committed, it would be deserving of the highest admiration : mingled, as it necessarily was in their case, with a large portion of that baser alloy, it is still a redeeming point in their character. Some of them, doubtless, were selfish or

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100.

Elevated
points of the
character of
the Jacobins.

* At the trial of Burke in Edinburgh, on December 24, 1828, a remarkable instance of this occurred. He was indicted for three cold-blooded murders, perpetrated on unsuspecting victims, whom he lured into his den, to sell their bodies. Subsequently it was ascertained he had murdered *sixteen* in this way. Yet this monster, who was tried along with a young woman, his associate, with whom he lived, no sooner heard the verdict of the jury, which found him guilty and acquitted her, than he threw his arms around her neck and kissed her, saying—“Thank God ! Mary, you are saved.” It occurred to the author at the moment, who conducted the prosecution on the part of the crown—“How many are there among his judges, jury, or accusers, who, in similar circumstances, would have done the same ?”

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rapacious, and used their power for the purposes of individual lust or private emolument. But others, among whom we must number Robespierre and St Just, were entirely free from this degrading contamination, and, in the atrocities they committed, were governed, if not by public principle, at least by private ambition. Even the blood which they shed was often the result, in their estimation, not so much of terror or danger, as of overbearing necessity. They deemed it essential to the success of freedom; and regarded the victims, who perished under the guillotine, as the melancholy sacrifice which required to be laid on its altar.

101.
Similarity
of the revo-
lutionary to
religious
fanaticism.

In arriving at this frightful conclusion, they were, doubtless, mainly influenced by the perils of their own situation. They massacred others because they were conscious that death, were they vanquished, justly awaited themselves. But still the weakness of humanity in their, as in many similar cases, deluded them by the magic of words, or the supposed influence of purer motives, and led them to commit the greatest crimes, while constantly professing, and often feeling, the noblest intentions. There is nothing surprising or incredible in this: we have only to recollect, that all France joined in a crusade against the Albigeois, and that its bravest warriors deemed themselves secure from eternal, by consigning thousands of wretches to temporal flames; we have only to go back, in imagination, to Godfrey of Bouillon and the Christian warriors putting forty thousand unresisting citizens to death on the storming of Jerusalem, and wading to the Holy Sepulchre ankle-deep in human gore—to be convinced that such delusions are not peculiar to any particular age or country, but that they are the universal offspring of fanaticism, whether in political or religious contests. The writers who represent the Jacobins as mere bloodthirsty wretches, vultures insatiate in their passion for destruction, are well-meaning and amiable, but weak and ignorant men, unacquainted with the real working of delusion or wickedness

in the human heart, and calculated to mislead rather than direct, future ages on the approach of times similar to that in which these obtain the ascendancy. Vice never appears in such colours : it invariably conceals its real deformity. It is by borrowing the language and assuming the garb of virtue, that its greatest triumphs are gained. It is the "deceitfulness of sin" which constitutes its greatest danger ; its worst excesses ever attest the truth of Rochefoucault's maxim, that "hypocrisy is the homage which vice pays to virtue." If other states are ever to be ruled by a Jacobin faction, the advent of their power will not be marked by sanguinary professions, or the hideous display of heartless atrocity. It will be ushered in by the warmest expressions of philanthropy, by boundless hopes of felicity, and professions of the utmost regard for the great principles of public justice and general happiness.^{1*}

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1 Levasseur
de la Sarthe,
i. 24, 80; iii.
164, 226.

There is no opinion more frequently stated by the annalists and historians of the Revolution on the popular side in France, than that the march of the Revolution was inevitable ; that an invincible fatality attends all such convulsions ; and that by no human exertions could its progress have been changed, or its horrors averted.† The able works of Thiers, Mignet, and many others, are

102.
Great error
of the revo-
lutionary
historians
on this sub-
ject.

* The ablest and most interesting apology for the Jacobins is to be found in the Memoirs of Levasseur de la Sarthe, himself no inconsiderable actor in their sanguinary deeds. It is highly satisfactory to have such a work to do justice to their intentions ; and it is a favourable symptom of the love of impartiality in the human heart, that even Robespierre and St Just have had their defenders.

Whatever opinions may be entertained on this point, one thing seems very clear, that Robespierre's abilities were of the highest order, and that the contrary opinions expressed by so many of his contemporaries, were suggested by envy or horror. It is impossible in any other way to account for his long dominion over France, at a period when talent of every sort was hurled forth in wild confusion to the great central arena at Paris. His speeches are a sufficient indication of the vigour of his mind ; they are distinguished in many instances by a nervous eloquence, a fearless energy, a simple and manly cast of thought, very different from most of the frothy declamations at the tribune.

† This doctrine is the one put by Corneille into the mouth of Theseus :—

"L'âme est donc tout esclave : une loi souveraine
Vers le bien ou le mal incessamment l'entraîne ;

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mainly directed to this end ; and it constitutes, in their estimation, the best apology for the Revolution. Never was an opinion more erroneous. There is nothing in the annals of human affairs which warrants the conclusion, that improvement necessarily leads to revolution ; and that in revolution, a succession of rulers, each more sanguinary and atrocious than the preceding, must be endured before the order of society is restored. It is not the career of reform, it is the career of *guilt*, which leads to these consequences : this deplorable succession took place in France, not because changes were made, but because boundless crimes in the course of these changes were committed. The partisans of liberal institutions have fallen into a capital error, when, in their anxiety to exculpate the actors in the Revolution, they have laid its horrors on the cause of the Revolution itself : to do so, was to brand the cause of freedom with infamy, when that infamy should have been confined to its wicked supporters. It was the early commission of crime by the leaders of the movement which precipitated and rendered irretrievable its subsequent scenes ; the career of passion in nations is precisely similar to its excesses in individuals, and subject to the same moral laws. If we would seek the key to the frightful aberrations of the Revolution, we have only to turn to the exposition, by the great English divines, of the progress of guilty passions in the individual. The description of the one might pass for a faithful portrait of the other.* There is a necessity to which both are sub-

Et nous ne recevons ni crainte ni désir
De cette liberté qui n'a rien à choisir.
Attachés sans relâche à cet ordre sublime,
Vertueux sans mérite et vicieux sans crime.
Qu'on massacre les rois, qu'on brise les autels,
C'est la faute des dieux, et non pas des mortels."

Edipe, Act iii. scene 6.

* Take, for example, the following passage from Archbishop Tillotson : " All vice stands upon a precipice ; to engage in any sinful course is to run down the hill. If we once let loose the propensities of our nature, we cannot gather in the reins and govern them as we please ; it is much easier not to begin a bad course, than to stop it when begun. 'Tis a good thing for a man

jected ; but it is not a blind fatality, or a necessary connection between change and convulsion. It is the moral law of nature, that vice, whether in nations or private men, when the proffered opportunities of repentance have been neglected, is made to work out its deserved punishment in the efforts which it makes for its own gratification.

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"For they shall hear me call, and oft be warn'd
Their sinful state, and to appease betimes
Th' incensèd Deity while offer'd grace
Invites; for I will clear their senses dark
What may suffice, and soften stony hearts
To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.
This my long sufferance and day of grace,
They who neglect and scorn, shall never taste,
But hard be harden'd, blind be blinded more,
That they may stumble on and deeper fall;
And none but such from mercy I exclude."*

The death of Hébert and the Anarchists was that of guilty depravity ; that of Robespierre and St Just of sanguinary fanaticism ; that of Danton and his confederates, of stoical infidelity ; that of Madame Roland and the Girondists, of reckless ambition and deluded virtue ; that of Louis and his family, of religious forgive-

103.
Provision
for the cor-
rection of
these exces-
sive evils.

to think to set bounds to himself in anything that is bad ; to resolve to sin in number, weight, and measure, with great temperance and discretion ; that he will commit this sin, and then give over ; to entertain but this one temptation, and after that shut the door, and admit no more. Our corrupt hearts, when they are once set in motion, are like the raging sea, to which we can set no bounds, nor say to it, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further. Sin is very cunning and deceitful, and does strangely gain upon men when once they give way to it. It is of a very bewitching nature, and hath strange arts of address and insinuation. The giving way to a small sin does marvellously prepare and dispose a man for a greater. By giving way to one little vice after another, the strongest resolution may be broken. 'Tis scarce imaginable of what force a single bad action is to produce more : for sin is very teeming and fruitful ; and though there be no blessing annexed to it, yet it does strangely increase and multiply. As there is a connection of one virtue with another, so vices are linked together, and one sin draws many after it. When the devil tempts a man to commit any wickedness, he does, as it were, lay a long train of sins ; and if the first temptation take, they give fire to another. Let us then resist *the beginning of sin* ! because we have then most power, and sin least."—TILLOTSON, *Serm. x. Works*, i. 91, fol. ed.—This might stand for a graphic picture of the downward progress of the revolutionary passion in nations ; philosophy will strive in vain to give so clear an elucidation of the causes which render it, when once thoroughly awakened, so destructive in its career.

* *Paradise Lost*, iii. 185.

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ness. The moralist will contrast the different effects of virtue and wickedness in the last moments of life ; the Christian will mark with thankfulness the superiority, in the supreme hour, to the sublimest efforts of human virtue, which was evinced by the believers in his own faith. It is this superiority which provides a remedy for the injustice which has occasioned it. Posterity invariably declares for the cause of virtue ; for it has ceased to have any interest to support that of vice. The march of democracy, though not prevented by the wisdom of man, is speedily stopped by the laws of nature. The people in the end learn from their own suffering, if they will not from the experience of others, that the gift of unbounded political power is fatal to those who receive it ; that despotism may originate in the workshop of the artisan as well as in the palace of the sovereign ; and that those who, yielding to the wiles of the tempter, eat of the forbidden fruit, must be driven from the joys of Paradise, to wander amid the suffering of a guilty world. Genius, long a stranger to the cause of order, resumes her place by its side ; she gives to a suffering, what she refused to a ruling power. The indignation of virtue, the satire of talent, is wreaked on the panderers to popular gratification ; the sycophancy of journals, the baseness of the press, the tyranny of the mob, employ the pencil of the Tacitus who portrays the decline and fall of such convulsions. It is this reaction of Genius against Violence, of Virtue against Vice, which steadies the march of human events, and renders the miseries of one age the source of elevation and instruction to those which are to succeed it. Whatever may be the temporary ascendancy of violence or anarchy, there can be but one opinion as to the final tendency of the laws of nature. We can discern the rainbow of peace, though not ourselves destined to reach the ark of salvation ; and look forward with confidence to the future improvement of the species, from amidst the storm which is to subvert the monarchies of Europe.

CHAPTER XVI.

CAMPAIGN OF 1794.

“THE war,” says Jomini, “so rashly provoked by the declamations of the Girondists, was hardly commenced in good earnest, when it became evident that all the established relations and balance of power in Europe were to be dissolved in the struggle. France and England had not yet joined in mortal conflict, and yet it was easy to foresee that the one was destined to become irresistible at land, and the other to acquire the dominion of the seas.”¹ It was not the mere energy of the Revolution, nor the closing of all other avenues of employment, which produced the fearful military power of France. These causes, while they alone were in operation, proved totally insufficient to withstand the shock of the disciplined armies of Germany. It was the subsequent despotism of the Committee of Public Salvation which consolidated the otherwise discordant materials of the Revolution, by superinducing the terror of authority on the fervour of freedom. The mere strength of enthusiastic feeling, even when exerted in the noblest of causes,—that of national defence,—can never produce those steady and persevering efforts which are requisite for durable success. It is power and force which can alone mould the evanescent passions into a lasting form. Liberty without discipline would have perished in licentiousness ; discipline without spirit would have proved inadequate to the struggle. It was the combination of the two which became so fatal to the

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1.
Military
strength of
France in
consequence
of the Revo-
lution.¹ Jom. v. 3.

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European monarchies, and, by turning all the energies of France into one regulated channel, converted the Reign of Terror into the School of Conquest.

2.
And naval
weakness.

But while these changes were in progress on the continent of Europe, a very different fate awaited the naval armaments of France. Power at sea, unlike victory at land, cannot spring from mere suffering, or from the energy of destitute warriors turned out with arms in their hands to plunder and oppress mankind. Fleets require nautical skill, commercial wealth, and extensive credit. Centuries of pacific exertion, habits acquired during many successive generations, are essential to greatness on that element. The general meets with resources of all kinds in the countries into which he turns his troops; the admiral finds nothing to support him in the sterile waste of the ocean: and before he can even put to sea and brave the fury of the waves, he must have laid in extensive stores, and constructed and equipped his vessels at an enormous expense. Without an accumulation of capital, and the gradual formation of a nursery of seamen, it is in vain to contend with an established naval power. The destruction of the capital and commerce of France during the fury of the Revolution, while it augmented, by the misery it produced, the military, destroyed, by the penury it occasioned, the maritime resources of the Republic. Before the British fleets had issued from their harbours, the flag of France had almost disappeared from the seas; commercial wealth, private enterprise, were extinguished; and the sanguinary government found that victories were not to be acquired at sea, like conquest by land, by merely forcing column after column of conscripts on board their vessels.¹

¹ Jom. v. 4.
Th. vi. 271.

3.
Respective
navies of the
two powers.

The consequence was, that from the very first the naval superiority of Great Britain became apparent. France, at the commencement of the war, had eighty-two ships of the line, and seventy-seven frigates; but the officers, chiefly drawn from the aristocratic classes, had in great part emi-

grated at the commencement of the Revolution; and those of an inferior order who supplied their place were deficient both in the education and experience requisite for the naval service. On the other hand, Great Britain had one hundred and twenty-nine ships of the line fit for sea, besides twenty-four guard-ships, and above one hundred frigates, of which ninety of each class were immediately put in commission; while seamen of the best description, to the amount of eighty-five thousand, were drawn from her inexhaustible merchant service. Unable to face their enemies in large fleets, the French navy remained in total inactivity; but their merchants, destitute of any pacific employment for their money, fitted out an immense number of privateers, which, for a considerable time, proved extremely injurious to British commerce.¹

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¹ New Ann.
Register,
pp. 336-342.
Jom. v. 278.
James i.
App. No. 6.

The efforts of government at the same period were vigorously directed to the suppression of sedition in Great Britain. The great extent and obvious danger of the illegal and revolutionary societies which had been formed in every part of the kingdom, in close alliance with the French Convention, left no room for doubt that vigorous measures were necessary to arrest the contagion. For this purpose, the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was proposed in Parliament by government, and excited the most angry discussions both in the legislature and the nation. Mr Fox objected in the strongest manner to the proposed measure, as destructive to the best principles of British liberty. "Was the government about," he exclaimed, "in their rage at the hatred excited by their tyranny, to erect tribunals to punish the indignant public? Was terror, as in France, to be made the order of the day, and not a voice to be allowed to be lifted against government? Was it resolved to demolish the British constitution, one part after another, under pretence of preventing its destruction by French principles? The object of the societies, which they did not scruple to avow, was to obtain universal suffrage. The word Convention was now held up as an

4.
Suspension
of the Ha-
beas Corpus
Act. Ar-
gument of
Mr Fox
against it.

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object of alarm, as if from it some calamity impended over the country; and yet, what was a convention but an assembly? If the people did anything illegal, they were liable to be imprisoned and punished at the common law. Did it follow that, because improper ideas of government had been taken up by the French, or because liberty had been there abused, similar misfortunes would befall this country? Had that nation been protected by a Habeas Corpus Act—had the government been constrained by standing laws to respect the rights of the community—these tenets would never have found an entrance into that unhappy country. By parity of reason, they were only to be dreaded here if the safeguards of the constitution were removed. Were the freedom of meeting to complain of grievances to be taken away, what would soon become of our boasted constitution? And if it is to be withdrawn till the discontented are rooted out, or the thirst for uncontrolled power assuaged in government, it will never be restored, and the liberties of Englishmen are finally destroyed.”

5.
And of Mr
Pitt in its
support.

On the other hand, it was contended by Mr Pitt and Lord Loughborough, that the question was, “Whether the dangers threatening the state were not greater than any arising from the suspension proposed, which was only to last for six months, and in the mean time would not affect the rights of any class of society. The truth was, that we were driven to the necessity of imitating French violence, to resist the contagion of French principles. Was lenity to be admitted when the constitution was at stake? Were a Convention upon Jacobin principles once established, who could foresee where it would end? Not to stop the progress of these opinions, were no better than granting a toleration to sedition and anarchy. It is in vain to deny the existence of designs against the government and constitution; and what mode of combating them can be so reasonable as the present suspension, which does not oppose the right of the people to meet together to petition

for reform, or a redress of abuses, but only aims at preventing the establishment of a power in the state superior to that of Parliament itself? The papers produced before the Committee demonstrate clearly that this is their object, and that they are leagued with all the societies which have brought desolation upon France; they have chosen a central spot to facilitate the assembly of demagogues from all quarters. Every society has been requested to transmit an account of its numbers, and arms have been procured and liberally distributed: unless these proceedings are speedily checked, the government will soon be set at nought, and a revolution, with all its horrors, overspread the land. Parliamentary reform was tried, settled, and extinguished in 1781 and 1782; it can only now be used as a cover for deeper designs. The phrase 'parliamentary reform' no more legalises seditious meetings, than 'God save the King,' written at the bottom of an insurrectionary proclamation, would make it innocent. Much is said of the low rank of the members of most of these societies, and their little power to do mischief; but it is easy to treat as imaginary all dangers that are checked in the bud.¹ One of the finest poets has said,—

'Treasons are never own'd but when descried;
Successful crimes alone are justified.'

Moved by these arguments, the House of Commons passed the bill for suspension by a majority of 261 to 42. It was adopted by the Lords without a division.

Various prosecutions took place in Scotland, which terminated in the conviction and transportation of the accused; of whom Hardy, Palmer, Muir, and Gerald were the most remarkable. Great was the indignation which this necessary and well-timed severity produced in the democratic party in Great Britain; and their writers, without one exception, for the next half-century, stigmatised the Scotch convictions as an unnecessary and unjustifiable stretch of oppression. But truth is great, and will prevail. The Whig party, in consequence of

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May 16.
¹ Ann. Reg.
pp. 268-274.
Parl. Deb.
xxx. 274-
299, 602.

6.
Trials for
treason in
Scotland.

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the revolution in England of 1832, got possession of power, which they held for the next seventeen years, under different administrations, without intermission,—and they then had an opportunity of carrying their principles of government into execution. The result was the Repeal agitation, followed by the rebellion of 1848 in Ireland, and the Chartist conspiracy, which so seriously threatened the monarchy in April 1848, in England. To repress these dangers, the Whig administration were compelled to pass a special statute, authorising the transportation of offenders in serious cases of sedition, as had of old been the common law of Scotland;* and the very same punishment, on conviction under it, was inflicted on Mitchell and Martin in Ireland, which had been stigmatised as so unjust when pronounced on Muir and Palmer in 1793.† In England no less than four Chartists were, in 1848, sentenced to transportation for life at the Old Bailey for sedition. So true it is that initial severity in political offences is often true humanity, and that the opposite temporising system often induces the reality of oppression, to avoid its imputation.

* The 8 and 9 Vict., c. 73.

† It is often said that these Scottish martyrs, as they were called, were transported for advocating Parliamentary reform, which was afterwards adopted by the legislature in 1832; and, under the influence of this opinion, a monument, during the Reform fervour, was raised to them by the more violent of that party, on the Calton Hill of Edinburgh. This opinion, however, is entirely erroneous. They were not transported for advocating parliamentary reform, but for advocating its support by the illegal and treasonable device of a British convention, which was to supersede Parliament, and corresponding societies, which were to spread its ramifications throughout the realm. Any object, how legitimate soever,—as the reduction of taxes, a change in the laws, or an alteration in domestic or foreign policy,—becomes equally seditious or treasonable if forwarded by such means, which plainly supersede government, and must lead to civil war. That the Scotch judgments were entirely conformable to Scotch law, has been long ago demonstrated. See Hume's *Criminal Law*, vol. i., 557, and Alison's *Criminal Law of Scotland*, i. 585-587. That they were entirely conformable to expedience, and dictated by state necessity, has been proved by the fact that the English government were driven to the passing of a statute declaring sedition, in aggravated cases, punishable by transportation, and a suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act—that is, to the adoption *in toto* of Mr Pitt's measures—in 1848, under the guidance of a Whig cabinet, of which Lord Campbell, one of the last and ablest of the opponents of Mr Pitt's repressive measures, was a member.

The result was different in England. The attention of the people was deeply excited by the trial of Hardy, Thelwall, and Horne Tooke, for treason, in London. The documents on which the prosecution was founded, left no doubt that these persons had been deeply implicated in designs for the violent change, if not the total subversion, of the government, by means of a convention of their own formation, not through the constitutional channel of Parliament.* The prosecutions, therefore, were justifiable and necessary; and yet—so readily does good spring out of the conflicting feelings of a really free community—their acquittal, by the independent verdict of a British jury, is to be regarded as an eminently fortunate event at that period. After so signal a triumph of popular principle, the most factious lost the power of alleging that

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7.

And Eng-
land, where
Hardy,
Thelwall,
and Horne
Tooke are
acquitted.

* The combination against which, on this occasion, the powers of government were exercised, was of the most extensive kind, and embraced the whole of Great Britain in its ramifications. The prisoners were charged with high treason, and having conspired to subvert the King, and levy war against his government. The trial, which occupied three weeks, excited the utmost interest in all parts of the country; during its whole continuance, the avenues to the court and the court itself were filled with anxious spectators. The opening speech of Mr Scott, the Attorney-General (afterwards Lord Eldon), occupied nine hours; the reply of Mr Erskine and Sir Vicary Gibbs was of the same length. The prisoners were indicted for high treason—the only step in the whole proceeding of which the policy was questionable, as it required a strained, or at least strict, interpretation of the law, to bring the prisoners within the provision of the treason law, on the footing of having been guilty of “Constructive Treason;” whereas the evidence of their being guilty of the minor crime of sedition was not only ample, but overwhelming. Hardy was the secretary of the association, the professed object of which was Parliamentary reform; but the illegality and danger of which consisted in this—that this, a legitimate object if pursued by legitimate means, was proposed to be brought about, not by the lawful means which the constitution recognised, but by intimidation, violence, and, if necessary, insurrection. In the “Rights of Man,” by Thomas Paine, a member of the French Convention, which the Association extensively circulated, it was said—“Hereditary succession requires a belief from man to which his reason cannot subscribe: the more ignorant any country is, the better is it fitted for that species of government. *A general revolution in the construction of governments is necessary.* Usurpation cannot alter the right of things. Sovereignty, as a matter of right, appertains to the nation only, not any individual. The romantic and barbarous classing of men into kings and subjects, though it may suit courtiers, cannot do so to citizens. All hereditary government is in its nature tyranny. When the bagatelles of monarchy, regency, and hereditary succession shall be exposed with all their absurdities, a new ray of light will be thrown over the world, and *the revolution* will derive

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the liberties of Great Britain were on the decline : satisfied with this great victory over their supposed oppressors, the people relapsed into their ancient habits of loyalty ; while the vehement demagogues, who had made so narrow an escape from the scaffold, hesitated before resorting again to practices of which the peril to themselves, as well as to the country, was now made manifest. The spirit of innovation, deprived of foreign support, and steadily resisted by the government, rapidly withered in the British soil : the passions of men, turned into another channel, soon fixed on different objects ; and the prosecution of the war with France became as great a source of interest to the multitude, as it had ever been to remodel the constitution after the example of the Constituent Assembly.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
268, 269.

The continuance of the war again gave rise to animated

new strength by being universally understood. It is now the cause of all nations against all courts." The addresses from republican societies in France to the Society, and found among their papers, and from the Association to them, or to the corresponding societies in Great Britain, contained ample evidence of their practical adoption and preparation of measures to carry into execution these principles. A letter, signed by the chairman and secretary, 11th Oct. 1792, contained these expressions—"Tyrants and tyranny are no more. How well purchased will be, *though at the expense of much blood*, the glorious and unprecedented advantage of saying 'Mankind is free.'" In answer to one of the vehement addresses of the French Convention, the president's letter, found entered in the books of the Association, bears—"You have addressed us with something more than good wishes (a supply of arms for the soldiers of freedom), since the condition of *our warriors* has excited your solicitude. The defenders of our liberty will one day be the supporters of your own. The moment cannot be distant when the people of France will offer their congratulations to a *National Convention in England*." These, and a vast number of documents containing similar expressions, left no room for doubt that the object of the Association was to erect a *legislature of their own*, which was to supersede the Parliament. Indeed, this was openly avowed by them. On 20th Jan. 1794, a general address was published and circulated by the Society, which bore—"How are we to seek redress? From the laws, as long as any redress can be obtained from them ; but we must not expect figs from thistles. We must have redress from *our own laws*, and not from the laws of our *plunderers, enemies, and oppressors*." And it was declared "that, upon the introduction of any bill inimical to the liberties of the people, such as suspending the *Habeas Corpus Act*," the Committee should issue summonses forthwith for the convocation of a general convention of the people, for the purpose of taking such measures into their consideration. On 30th Jan. 1794, a *secret* committee was appointed, to consider what measures might be necessary, according to the measures of the House of Commons ; and at a meeting held on Dec. 28, 1793, Mr Redhead Yorke, one of the speakers, said to the Association, "That it was

debates in both houses of Parliament. On the part of the Opposition, it was urged by Mr Fox and Mr Sheridan, "That the conduct of government, since the war commenced, had been a total departure from the principles of moderation, on which they had so much prided themselves before it broke out. They then used language which breathed only the strictest neutrality, and this continued even after the King had been dethroned, and many of the worst atrocities of the Revolution had been perpetrated : but, now, even though we did not altogether reject negotiation, we put forth declarations evidently calculated to render it impossible, and shake all faith in our national integrity. The Allies had first by Prince Cobourg issued a proclamation, in which they engaged to retain whatever strongholds they might conquer, merely in pledge for

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8.

Argument
against the
war by Mr
Fox and the
Opposition.

impossible to do anything without some blood, and he hoped to see *Mr Pitt's and the King's heads upon Temple Bar* ;" whereupon all the meeting rose up and shook hands with him.

These, and similar documents and proceedings, left no room as to the objects of the Association ; but still there was great legal difficulty in bringing the case of the prisoners within the rule as to overt acts, either showing an intent to compass the king's death, or levy war against him, or depose him from his government. Accordingly, many able lawyers think the acquittal of the prisoners of the high treason charged, how clearly soever they were found guilty of sedition, was a fortunate circumstance, as it at once saved the law and stopped the treason.—See *State Trials*, October 26, 1794 ; and Twiss's *Life of Lord Eldon*, i. 240-261.

George III., whose strong natural sagacity had made him averse to the prosecution of these offences as high treason from the beginning, was rejoiced at the acquittals. Addressing Lord Chancellor Loughborough, who was understood to have taken a leading part in recommending them, he said—" You have got into the wrong box, my lord ; you have got into the wrong box : constructive treason won't do, my lord ; constructive treason won't do."—LORD CAMPBELL'S *Lives of the Chancellors*, vi. 267.

The English lawyers were landed in this serious dilemma, from the obvious defect of the law, which recognised no medium between sedition, punishable only by imprisonment, and high treason, to which the highest pains were attached. The true medium was familiar to the Scotch law, which held the more serious cases of sedition—those in which civil war and a forcible change of government were recommended or pointed at—as punishable by transportation—a penalty certainly not too heavy for so dangerous a delinquency.

The infliction of this penalty on the leading delinquents in Scotland, was so long made the subject of invective by the English democratic party, because it was so necessary and effectual—it hit incoherate treason between wind and water ; and hence the clamour raised against it, as the roar against all effective remedies of favourite public delusions.

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Louis XVII. ; and five days afterwards, to their eternal disgrace, they revoked that very proclamation, and openly avowed the intention, since uniformly acted upon, of making a methodical war of conquest on France. Supposing that the British government should be able to clear itself of all share in this infamous transaction, what was to be said of the declaration issued by Lord Hood on the 23d August, on the capture of Toulon, wherein he took possession of the town on the express conditions of maintaining the constitution of 1789, preserving the fleet of Louis XVII., and protecting all Frenchmen who repaired to our standard ? after which came a dark enigmatical declaration from his Majesty, which, stripped of the elegant rubbish with which it was loaded, amounted merely to this, that the restoration of monarchy was the only condition on which we would treat with France. “ Has anything occurred to alter the probability of success in the war ? Have the triumphs of the coalition in Flanders been so very brilliant, the success of Lord Moira’s expedition to Granville so decisive, the efforts at Toulon so victorious, as to afford more cheering prospects than were held out at its commencement ? Has the internal condition of that country, and the prospects of the Royalist party, improved so much under the system of foreign attack, as to render it advisable to continue the contest for their sakes ? Is not the internal state of France so divided, that it is impossible to say that the Royalist party, even in the districts most attached to monarchical principles, could agree on any form of government ? And what have we done to support them ? Liberated the garrisons of Valenciennes and Mayence, when they were shut up within their walls, and given them the means, by the absurd capitulation which we granted, of acting with decisive effect against their Royalist fellow-citizens in the west of France ! All the treaties we have entered into contained a clause, by which the contracting parties bound themselves not to

lay down their arms while any part of the territory of either of them remained in the hands of the enemy. How have they adhered, or are likely to adhere, to this stipulation? How has Prussia adhered? Why, she publicly declared her intention of laying down her arms, at the very time when large parts of her allies' territories were in the occupation of the enemy, because she had discovered that the war was burdensome. The Emperor has refused to agree to this secession, and Prussia has been retained an unwilling and feeble combatant on our side, only by the bribe of enormous subsidies. It is evident what the result will be: our allies will one by one drop off, or become so inefficient as to be perfectly useless, when the contest proves either perilous or burdensome; and we shall be left alone, with the whole weight of a contest on our own shoulders, undertaken for no legitimate object, continued for no conceivable end.

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“It is in vain to conceal that we have made no advance whatever towards any rational prospect of closing the contest with either honour or advantage. In the first campaign, the Duke of Brunswick was defeated, and Flanders overrun; in the next, the most formidable confederacy ever formed in Europe has been baffled, and a furious civil war in different parts of the Republic extinguished. What have we to oppose to this astonishing exertion of vigour? The capture of a few sugar islands in the West Indies. Of what avail are they, or even the circumscribing the territorial limits of France itself, when such elements of strength exist in its interior? But let us revert to our old policy of attending to our maritime concerns, and disregarding the anarchy and civil wars of the neighbouring states; and then, indeed, the conquests in the East and West Indies would afford an excellent foundation for the only desirable object—a general pacification.¹ All views of aggrandisement on the part of France *are evidently unattainable, and must*

9.

And its non-success.

¹ Parl. Hist. xxi. 615, 623, 632.

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be abandoned by that power; so that the professed object of the war—permanent security to ourselves—may now securely be obtained.”

10.
Reply by
Pitt and Mr
Jenkinson.

On the other hand, it was contended by Mr Pitt and Mr Jenkinson,* “That the real object of the war from the outset had been to obtain indemnity for the past and security for the future. Are either of these objects likely to be obtained at this period? At present, there is no security for the continuance of peace, even if it were signed, for a single hour. Every successive faction which has risen to the head of affairs in France, has perished the moment that it attempted to imprint moderation on the external or internal measures of the Revolution. What overthrew the administration of Necker? Moderation! What destroyed the Orleanists, the Girondists, the Brissotins, and all the various parties which have successively risen and fallen in that troubled hemisphere? Moderation! What has given its long lease of power to the anarchical faction of which Robespierre is the head? The total want of moderation: the infernal energy, the unmeasured wickedness, of its measures. What prospect is there of entering into a lasting accommodation with a power, or what the guarantee for the observance of treaties by a faction, whom a single nocturnal tumult may hurl from the seat of government, to make way for some other more outrageous and extravagant than itself? The campaign hitherto has only lasted a few weeks; yet in that time we have taken Landrecies, formerly considered as the key of France; and though we have lost Courtray and Menin, yet the vigour and resolution with which the whole allied army has combated, gives good reason to hope, if not for a successful march to Paris (which, however, is by no means improbable), at least for such an addition to the frontier barrier as may prove at once a curb on France, and an excellent base for offensive operations. It is impossible to say what government we

* Afterwards Lord Liverpool.

are to propose for France, in the event of the Jacobins being overthrown, because that must depend on the circumstances of the times, and the wishes of its inhabitants ; but this much may safely be affirmed, that, with the sanguinary faction which now rules its councils, accommodation is impossible.

“ The present is not a contest for distant or contingent objects : it is not a contest for power or glory : as little is it a contest for commercial advantage, or any particular form of government. It is a contest for the security, the tranquillity, and the very existence of Great Britain, connected with that of every established government, and every country in Europe. This was the object of the war from its commencement ; and every hour tends more strongly to demonstrate its justice. In the outset the internal anarchy of France, how distressing or alarming soever, was not deemed a sufficient ground for the hostile interference of this country ; but could the same be affirmed, when the King was beheaded, and a revolutionary army, spreading everywhere the most dangerous doctrines, overwhelmed the Low Countries ? Is that danger now at an end ? The prospect of bringing the war to a conclusion, as well as the security for any engagements which we may form with France, must ultimately depend upon the destruction of those principles now triumphant in that distracted country, which are alike subversive of every regular government, and destructive of all good faith. We do not disclaim any interference in the internal affairs of that country ; on the contrary, should an opportunity occur where it may be practised with advantage, we will not engage to abstain from it. We only say, that such is not the primary object of the contest ; and that, if attempted, it will be, as has been the case in all former wars, considered as an operation of the war.

“ There is no contradiction between the proclamation of Lord Hood at Toulon, and the declaration of his

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11.
Statement of
the objects
of the war.

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12.
Impossibility of negotiation.

Majesty of 29th October. Both promise protection to such of the French as choose to declare for a constitutional monarchy; and to both we shall adhere. By entering into a negotiation, we should give confidence and vigour to the French, and entirely dissolve the formidable confederacy formed to lower their ambition. While the present system continues in France, we can have no peace on any terms short of absolute ruin and dishonour. By an express law of their constitution, any Frenchman who shall enter into a negotiation with this country on any other terms than surrendering our constitution, dethroning our virtuous Sovereign, and introducing into this country the horrible anarchy which prevails in their distracted state, is declared a traitor. Are we prepared to make such sacrifices to obtain the blessings of fraternisation with the disciples of Robespierre? Nor let it be supposed that the colonial conquests we have made are of little moment in bringing about in the end a termination to this frightful contest. Is it of no moment, in the first year of the war, to have cut up the resources and destroyed the sinews of the commerce of our enemies? The injury to their revenues thence arising may not be felt during the continuance of the monstrous and gigantic expedients of finance to which they have had recourse; but it is not on that account the less real, or the less likely to be felt, on the restoration of such a regular government as may afford us any chance of an accommodation." On a division, the House, by a majority of two hundred and eight to fifty-one, supported the government.¹

¹ Parl. Hist. xxxi. 156, 632, 659.

13.
Supplies and forces voted for the year 1794.

The supplies granted by Parliament for the prosecution of the war, during the year 1794, were proportioned to the increasing magnitude and importance of the strife in which the nation was engaged. For the service of the navy eighty-five thousand men were voted; thirty thousand men were added to the regular native army; and the total number under arms in the British dominions, including fencibles and militia, was raised to one hundred

and forty thousand men, besides forty thousand foreign soldiers employed on the Continent. These numbers were described by Mr Pitt as "unparalleled, and such as could hardly be exceeded:" such was the happy ignorance of those times in regard to the exertions of which a nation is capable. To meet these extraordinary efforts, an income of £20,000,000, besides £11,800,000 for the charge of the debt, was required; and for this purpose a loan of £11,000,000 was voted by Parliament; so early in the contest was this ruinous system of laying upon posterity the burdens of the moment adopted.¹

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¹ Parl. Hist.
xxx. 557,
563. Ann.
Reg. 69, 70.

Meanwhile the ascendancy of the English navy soon produced its wonted effects on the colonial possessions of the enemy. Soon after the commencement of hostilities, Tobago was taken by a British squadron; and in the beginning of March 1794, an expedition was fitted out against Martinique, which, after a vigorous resistance, fell on the 23d. Shortly after, the principal forts in St Domingo were wrested from the Republicans by the British forces; while the wretched planters, a prey to the flames lighted by Brissot and the friends of negro emancipation, at the commencement of the Revolution, of which a full account will hereafter be given, were totally ruined. No sooner was this success achieved, than the indefatigable English commanders, Sir John Jarvis and Sir Charles Grey, turned their arms against St Lucia, which was subjected to the British domination on the 4th April. Guadaloupe was next attacked, and, on the 25th, that fine island, with all its rich dependencies, was added to the list of the conquered colonies. Thus, in little more than a month, the French were entirely dispossessed of their West India possessions, with hardly any loss to the victorious nation.¹

14.
British con-
quests in the
West Indies.
April 1793.

March 23.

April 4.

² Ann. Reg.
p. 133, 337,
339, 340.
Th. vi. 301,
302.

15.
Frightful
state of St
Domingo.

The once beautiful island of St Domingo meanwhile continued a prey to the frightful disorders arising from precipitate emancipation. "It had gone through," says the Republican historian, "the greatest succession of

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calamities of which history makes mention." The whites had at first embraced with enthusiasm the cause of the Revolution ; and the Mulattoes, to whom the Constituent Assembly had extended the gift of freedom, were not less attached to the principles of democracy, and openly aspired to dispossess the planters, by force, of those political privileges which had hitherto been their exclusive property. But, in the midst of these contests, the negroes had revolted against both ; and, without distinguishing friend from foe, applied the firebrand indiscriminately to every civilised dwelling. Distracted by such an accumulation of horrors, the Constituent Assembly at once declared them all free. From the moment that emancipation was announced, the colony became the scene of the most horrible devastations : and the contending parties among the higher orders mutually threw upon each other the blame of having brought a frightful party into their contests, whose ravages were utterly destructive to both. In truth, it was owing to neither, but to the precipitate measures of emancipation, dictated by the ardent and inexperienced philanthropists of the Constituent Assembly, whose measures have consigned that unhappy colony, after thirty years of unexampled suffering, to a state of slavery, under the name of "The Rural Code," infinitely worse than that of the French planters.¹

¹ Th. vi. 301.
Mackenzie's
St Domingo,
201, 232.

16.
And in the
Mediterranean, where
Corsica is
reduced.

In the Mediterranean also the power of the British navy was speedily felt. The disaster at Toulon having totally paralysed the French navy in that quarter, the British fleet was enabled to carry the land forces, now rendered disposable by the evacuation of Toulon, to whatever quarter they chose. Corsica was the selected point of attack, which, early in 1794, had shown symptoms of revolt against the Republican authorities. Three thousand soldiers and marines were landed, and, after some inconsiderable successes, nearly effected the subjugation of the island by the capture of the fortress of Bastia, which capitulated at the end of May. It is remarkable that

NELSON was employed in this service, and, by an extraordinary coincidence, Napoleon had shortly before been engaged in an expedition which set sail from it against Ajaccio: so that the arms of both the British hero and the future French emperor were employed first in any considerable command in the same island, and in expeditions, the one from, the other against, the same petty fortress. The only remaining stronghold of the Republicans, Calvi, was besieged until the 1st August, when it surrendered to the British arms. The crown of Corsica, offered by Paoli, and the aristocratic party, to the king of Great Britain, was accepted; and efforts were immediately made to confer upon the inhabitants a constitution similar to that of Great Britain—a project about as practicable as it would have been to have clothed the British plains with the fruits which ripen under the sunny cliffs of Corsica.¹

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¹ Jom. v.
192. Ann.
Reg. 340,
341.

But a more glorious triumph was awaiting the British arms. The French government had, by great exertions, got twenty-six ships of the line into a state fit for service at Brest, and being extremely anxious to secure the arrival of a large fleet laden with provisions, which was approaching from America, and promised to relieve the famine which was now felt with uncommon severity in all parts of France, sent positive orders to Admiral Villaret Joyeuse to put to sea. On the 20th of May, the Republicans set sail; and on the 28th, Lord Howe, who was well aware of the expected arrival of the convoy, and kept a sharp look-out by means of his inshore squadron, soon hove in sight, with the Channel fleet, consisting of twenty-six line-of-battle ships. The French were immediately formed in line, in order of battle, and a partial action ensued between the rearguard of their line and the vanguard of the British squadron, in the course of which the *Revolutionnaire* was so much damaged, that she struck to the *Audacious*, but, not being taken possession of by the victors before nightfall, was towed the following morning into Rochefort. During

17.
Prepara-
tions for the
battle of the
1st June,
by Admiral
Howe and
the Channel
fleet.

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the next day the manœuvres were renewed on both sides, each party endeavouring to obtain the weather-gage of the other; and Lord Howe, at the head of his fleet, passed through the French squadron. But the whole ships not having taking the position assigned to them, the action, after a severe commencement, was discontinued, and the British admiral strove with the utmost skill to maintain the wind of the enemy. During the two following days a thick fog concealed the rival fleets from each other, though they were so near, that both sides were well aware that a great battle was approaching, and the officers with difficulty restrained the ardour by which their crews were animated.¹

¹ Jom. v. 283, 288. James, i. 205-219. Th. vi. 304. Ann. Reg. 342, 343.

18.
Lord Howe
breaks the
French line.

At length, on the 1st June, a day ever memorable in the naval annals of England, the sun broke forth with unusual splendour, and discovered the French fleet in order of battle, a few miles from the British, awaiting the combat, while an agitated sea promised the advantage of the wind to an immediate attack. Lord Howe instantly bore down, in an oblique direction, upon the enemy's line, designing to repeat the manœuvre long known, though seldom as yet practised, in the British navy, so ingeniously traced to scientific principles by Clerk of Eldin, and so successfully carried into execution by Rodney, on the suggestion of Sir Charles Douglas, his captain of the fleet, on the 12th April.* Having the

* An animated and interesting controversy, conducted with remarkable acuteness and zeal on both sides, took place twenty years ago, as to whether Mr Clerk of Eldin, author of the "Naval Tactics," or Sir Charles Douglas, captain of the fleet to Rodney, had the merit of having first discovered the celebrated manœuvre of breaking the enemy's line, and attacking them to leeward. It was conducted by Professor Playfair and Mr William Clerk, son of the author of the "Naval Tactics," on one side, and the gallant Sir Howard Douglas, son of Sir Charles, on the other. It was admitted on all hands, that Sir Charles—who was beside Rodney when passing to leeward of the French line on the contrary tack—having failed in the attempt to weather their van on 12th April 1782, seeing a gap in the enemy's line, suddenly, on the inspiration of the moment, suggested, in the most energetic manner, the passing through, to the admiral, by whom the advice was instantly followed. Thus it was conceded that he was the person who had the merit of having first carried *into execution* that brilliant manœuvre. But the point was, whether Sir Charles

weather-gage of the enemy, he was enabled to break their line near the centre, and double with a preponderating force on the one-half of their squadron. The signal he displayed was No. 39, the purport of which was, "that, having the weather-gage of the enemy, the admiral means to pass between the ships of their line and engage them *to leeward*, leaving, however, a discretion to each captain to engage on the windward or leeward." The French fleet was drawn up in close line, stretching nearly east and west; and a heavy fire commenced upon the British ships as soon as they came within range. They did not come perpendicularly upon their adversaries as at Trafalgar, but made sail abreast, in such a manner as that each ship should, as soon as possible, cut the line, and get alongside of its destined antagonist, and engage it to leeward, so that, if worsted, the enemy could not get away.¹

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¹ Barrow's
Howe, 232.
Brenton, i.
129. James,
i. 147.

Had the admiral's orders been literally obeyed, or capable of complete execution, the most decisive naval victory recorded in history would in all probability have attended the British arms. But the importance of specific obedience, in the vital point of engaging the enemy *to leeward*, was not then generally understood; and the enemy's line was so regular and compact, that in most places it was thought to be, and in some was, impervious. The consequence was, that five only of the ships after the

19.
Commence-
ment of the
action.

Douglas did this on his own *original* impulse at the moment, as Wellington in the case of the flank attack on the opening in the French line at Salamanca, or whether he did so in consequence of having previously been made acquainted with the suggestions of Mr Clerk of Eldin on the subject.

The main strength of Mr Clerk of Eldin's partisans lay in the fact, which was proved by a great number of concurring witnesses, that Lord Rodney, especially in his later years, frequently said, with the generosity which so often accompanies real elevation of mind, that he had gained the victory of the 12th April in consequence of having studied and adopted Mr Clerk's suggestions contained in his "*Naval Tactics*," printed and circulated in the January preceding. It was stated also, by various persons, that Lord Cranstoun, who had been on board the fleet going out, said repeatedly that he had heard Rodney, at his own table during the voyage, discuss Mr Clerk's projects, and express his intention of breaking the line, in pursuance of his suggestions, if he fell in with the enemy. These testimonies, which came from the most respectable persons, embracing, among others, Sir Walter Scott, Lord

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Queen Charlotte, viz., the Defence, Marlborough, Royal George, Queen, and Brunswick, succeeded in passing through. The Cæsar, in particular, which was the leading vessel when the signal for close action was flying

Chief Commissioner Adam, and many others, naturally produced a great impression, and amply justified the zeal with which the family and friends of Mr Clerk of Eldin strove to appropriate to him the merit of the original idea on the subject. To this it was added, that Sir Charles Douglas had had several conferences with Mr Clerk on the subject of naval tactics, at one of which Lord Chief Commissioner Adam was present, shortly before leaving Britain, which he was said to have done some months after Rodney, who set sail from Portsmouth on 2d January 1782, in which the plan of breaking the line was distinctly explained to that officer by Mr Clerk.

On the other hand, Sir Howard Douglas, on behalf of his father, advanced a great variety of proofs of a still more convincing, because a more authentic, kind. The "Naval Tactics," as it now stands, was *published* for the first time in 1790; but fifty copies were thrown off and distributed in the first week of January 1782, three months before Rodney's battle was fought, and the case for Mr Clerk's partisans was mainly rested on the hypothesis, said to be established by conclusive evidence, that Rodney had seen, or at least heard of, one of these copies, and adopted its principles. But Sir Howard overturned all these inferences, by proving that *the breaking the line and attacking to leeward*—the peculiar manœuvre which gained the battle of 12th April—was *not mentioned in the edition of the "Naval Tactics," printed in 1782, at all*, but appeared for the first time in the edition of 1790, eight years after the battle had been gained. This was admitted by Mr Clerk himself in the 1790 edition.* It is evident, therefore, that, whether Rodney or Sir Charles Douglas knew of the 1782 edition or not, when the battle of 12th April in that year was fought, it is not from it they could have taken the idea of the brilliant manœuvre which won the victory. In truth, various accounts from eyewitnesses concurred in stating, that, so far from the breaking of the line and engaging to leeward having been previously thought or determined on by Rodney, it was taken up at the moment by Sir Charles Douglas, in consequence of having observed an accidental gap in the French line in the middle of the battle, and was in truth *forced by him, after a considerable altercation and much resistance on his part, on Rodney*.† Sir Howard has shown, too, from the log of the vessel in which he sailed, that Lord Cranstoun could not have heard the conversations said to have been reported by him at the admiral's table on the voyage out, as he only arrived in time to dine with him the day before the battle. In regard to the assertion that Sir Charles Douglas sailed some months after Rodney, and that in the interval Mr Clerk had met him, and explained the breaking of

* "These observations (on the attack to the leeward) were intended to be inserted in the first edition of this essay, printed January 1, 1782, as being applicable to the two similar encounters of Lord Rodney, on 15th and 19th May 1780, and as well as those of the 27th July, where the adverse fleets had passed each other on contrary tacks. But it was afterwards thought proper to omit them, as it was conceived it might be prejudicial to the other parts of the work to advance anything doubtful; no example of cutting an enemy's line in an attack from the leeward, before that time, having been given."—*Naval Tactics*, p. 119; note, edition 1790.

† Several most respectable persons on board Rodney's ship (the Formidable) at the time Sir Charles Douglas suggested the breaking of the line to the admiral, concur in this statement. Take, for example, the following from Captain Sir Charles Dashwood, then aide-de-camp to Rodney on board the Formidable:—"After attentively observing the enemy's line, and remaining some time in deep meditation, Sir Charles said, addressing the admiral, 'Sir George, I

from the admiral's mast-head, backed her main-topsails, and engaged on the windward of the enemy; and the Gibraltar also omitted to obey the order, by crossing the French admiral and engaging his second ahead—a disheartening circumstance, though arising, as it afterwards

the line, it appeared, from the log of the *Formidable*, that Rodney and Sir Charles left London together on the 2d December 1781, and on the 2d January 1782 sailed together for the West Indies. Lord Chief Commissioner Adam, when applied to on the subject, declared he had no recollection of any such meeting or conversation. Mr Clerk also himself, in none of the successive editions which he published of his work during his life, ever once asserted he had met with Sir Charles Douglas, or explained his system to him previous to Rodney's victory, although his son said he had done so after his death—an omission which was not likely to have happened, if he had been conscious of having been the original author of the manœuvre which had gained that brilliant victory. Perhaps these conflicting statements may furnish the true key to the fact, in regard to this much agitated controversy, which is, that Rodney, conscious that the manœuvre which won the day had been in a manner forced upon him by his flag-captain, was afterwards, in his old age, more solicitous than he would have been in his earlier years to take the merit of the movement, and claim forethought and consideration on his part for a step which was in truth the happy inspiration of genius at the moment in another, to whom the glory of the success really belongs.

The breaking of the line and the engaging the enemy's fleet to leeward, since so often and successfully practised against the French at sea, though not generally done before, was not, previous to Rodney's memorable battle, unknown in the British service. A century before, it had been practised in a battle with the Dutch. "Sir George, with nine of his headmost ships, charged through the Dutch fleet and got the weathergage."—LEDYARD'S *Naval History*, b. iii. p. 542. This is the account of the battle, 16th August 1652. In truth, this manœuvre has been adopted by military genius on the inspiration of the moment, from the earliest times, both at land and sea. It was the leading principle of the fierce engagements between the brass-headed galleys of antiquity, and won their greatest naval victories; it was applied with decisive success by Wellington, when he interposed in the gap between Thomièrè's division and the remainder of the army at Salamanca; and by Napoleon, when he hurled Soult forward to seize the deserted hill of Pratzen, in the centre of the allied line at Austerlitz.

See, for this interesting controversy, *Edinburgh Review*, April 1830, vol. li. p. 1; PLAYFAIR'S *Works*, iii. 461, and SIR HOWARD DOUGLAS'S *Naval Evolutions*, London, 1832, where the subject is most ably treated, and all the contemporary statements from eyewitnesses on Rodney's victories are to be found.

give you joy of the victory.' 'Pooh,' said Rodney, 'the day is not half won yet.' 'Break the line, Sir George,' said Douglas; 'the day is your own, and I will insure the victory.' 'No,' said the admiral; 'I will not break my line.' After another request and another refusal, Sir Charles desired the helm to be put a-port, upon which Sir George ordered it to starboard. Sir Charles again ordered it a-port: upon which Rodney sternly observed, 'Remember I am commander-in-chief: starboard, sir.' In two minutes, they again met on the deck, and Sir Charles said, 'Only break the line, Sir George, and the day is your own.' The admiral then said, in a quick and hurried way, 'Well, well, do as you like.' 'Port the helm!' upon this, cried Sir Charles. Firing commenced on the larboard side; in two minutes the *Formidable* passed between two French ships, each nearly touching us, followed by the *Namur* and the other ships astern; and from that minute victory was decided in our favour." Sir Joseph Yorke's and F. Thesiger's evidence is precisely to the same effect.—See Sir Howard Douglas's Appendix, p. 1-10.

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appeared, from want of capacity rather than timidity on the part of its captain.* Howe, however, was not discouraged, but held steadily on, walking on the front of his poop along with Sir Roger Curtis, Sir Andrew Douglas, and other officers, while the crew were falling fast around him, and the spars and rigging rattled down on all sides, under the terrible and constantly increasing fire of the enemy. With perfect composure, the British admiral ordered not a shot to be fired, but the pilot to lay him alongside of the Montagne of 120 guns, the greatest vessel in the French line, and probably the largest then in the world. So awful was the prospect that awaited the French vessel from the majestic advance of the British admiral, that Jean Bon Saint André, the commissioner of the Convention on board, overcome with terror, took refuge below. After many entreaties, Howe allowed a straggling fire to be returned, but from the main and quarter deck only ; and reserving his whole broadside, poured it with awful force into the stern of the Montagne, as he slowly passed through the line between that huge three-decker and the Jacobin of eighty guns. So close did the ships pass on this occasion, that the tricolor flag, as it waved at the Montagne's flag-staff, brushed the main and mizen shrouds of the Queen Charlotte ; and so terrible was the effect of the broadside, that three hundred men were killed or wounded by that discharge.¹

¹ Barrow's
Life of
Howe, 232,
233. Bren-
ton, i. 129,
130. James,
i. 147, 148.
Vict. et
Conq. iii.
20. Jom. v.
290. Toul.
iv. 247.

20.
Desperate
conflict
which en-
sued.

Fearful of encountering a similar broadside on the other side, the captain of the Jacobin stretched across under the Montagne's lee, and thus threw herself a little behind that vessel right in the Queen Charlotte's way, in the very position which Howe had designed for himself to engage the enemy's three-decker. The British admiral, therefore, was obliged to alter his course a little,

* The rudder of the *Cæsar* had been early in the action disabled by a chance shot, which was the main cause of that vessel not breaking the line : though the captain was afterwards, at his own request, brought to a court-martial, and dismissed the service.

and pass aslant between the two vessels, and, having thus got between them, opened a tremendous fire on both. The Jacobin soon made sail, to get out of the destructive range, and, being to the leeward of the British admiral, he effected his escape ; but the Montagne could not do the same, being to the windward, and she would unquestionably have been taken, as she was hardly firing at all after the first awful broadside, when the foretop-mast of the Queen Charlotte came down with a tremendous crash. During the confusion occasioned by this catastrophe, the Montagne, taking advantage of the momentary inability of her antagonist to move, contrived to sheer off, leaving the British admiral now engaged with the two ships second and third astern of her. The Vengeur of seventy-four guns was warmly engaged at this time with the Brunswick, under Harvey ; but another French ship, the Achille, came up on the other side, and a terrible combat began on the part of the British vessel, thus engaged on both hands. It was sustained, however, with admirable courage. Captain Harvey was severely wounded in the hottest part of the engagement, but, before being carried down, he said—"Persevere, my brave lads, in your duty : continue the action with spirit for the honour of our king and country, and remember my last words, 'The colours of the Brunswick shall never be struck.'" Such heroism was not long of meeting with its reward : the Ramillies soon after came up, and opened her fire upon the Vengeur ; the load was taken off the Brunswick ; by a fortunate shot the rudder of the French vessel was shot away, and a large opening beat in her stern, into which the water rushed with great violence. The Vengeur was now found to be sinking ; the Achille made off, followed by the Ramillies, to which she soon struck ; and the Vengeur shortly after went down with three hundred and fifty of her crew, four hundred and fifty having been humanely taken off by the boats of the Alfred and Culloden.^{1*}

¹ James, i. 162, 165.
Brenton, i. 130, 131.
Barrow's Howe, 233, 234. Jom. v. 291.
Toul. iv. 247.

* It was stated in the French Convention, and has been repeated in all the

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21.

Results of
the battle.

The French now began to move off in all quarters, and the British ships, with their prizes, closed round their admiral. The damage sustained by the victors was inconsiderable, except in four ships, which were disabled for further service ; fifteen sail of the line were ready to renew the battle ; they had still the weather-gage of the enemy ; ten of the French line had struck, though six only of them had been secured, and five of their ships were dismasted, and were slowly going off under their sprit-sails. Had Nelson been at the head of the fleet, there can be little doubt the disabled ships would all have been taken, and perhaps a victory as decisive as Trafalgar totally destroyed the Brest fleet. But the British admirals, at that period, were in a manner ignorant of their own prowess ; the securing of the prizes taken was deemed the great object ; and thus the pursuit was discontinued, and the enemy, contrary to all expectation, got their dismasted ships off, and before dark were entirely out of sight. Six ships of the line, however, besides the *Vengeur*, which sank, remained in the possession of the British admiral, and were brought into Plymouth ; while the remains of the French squadron, diminished by eight of their number, and with a loss of eight thousand men, took refuge in the roads of Berthaume, and ultimately regained the harbour of Brest, shattered, dismasted, riddled with shot :¹ how different from the splendid fleet which had so

¹Jom.v.290.
Toul.iv.248.
Ann. Reg.
p. 34.

James, i.
172, 174.
Brenton, i.
141, 148.
Barrow's
Howe, 251,
252.

French histories, that when the *Vengeur* sank, her crew were shouting "*Vive la République !*" Knowing that the gallantry of the French was equal to such an effort, the author with pleasure transcribed this statement in his former editions ; but he has now ascertained that it was unfounded, not only from the account of Captain Brenton (i. 131), but from the information given him by a gallant naval officer, Admiral Griffiths, who was in the *Brunswick* on the occasion, and saw the *Vengeur* go down. There were cries heard, but they were piteous cries for relief, which the British boats afforded to the utmost of their power. Among the survivors of the *Vengeur's* crew were Captain Renaudin and his son, a brave boy of twelve years of age. They were taken up by different boats, and mutually mourned each other as dead : till they accidentally met at Portsmouth in the street, and rushed into each other's arms with a rapture indescribable. They were both soon after exchanged ; a braver and more humane father and son never breathed.—JAMES, i. 165.

recently departed amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants!* The loss of the British was two hundred and ninety killed, and eight hundred and fifty-eight wounded; in all, eleven hundred and forty-eight, being less than that sustained in the six French ships alone which were made prizes.†

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The Republicans were in some degree consoled for this disaster by the safe arrival of the great American convoy, chiefly laden with flour, consisting of one hundred and sixty sail, and valued at £5,000,000 sterling—a supply of incalculable importance to the wants of a population, whom the Reign of Terror and civil dissension had brought to the verge of famine. They entered the harbour of Brest a few days after the engagement, having escaped, as if by a miracle, the vigilance of the British cruisers. Their safety was, in a great degree, owing to the sagacity of the admiral, who traversed the scene of destruction a day or two after the battle, and, judging from the magnitude and number of the wrecks which were floating about, that a terrible battle must have taken place, concluded that the victorious party would not be in a condition for pursuit, and resolved to hold on to his course for the French harbour.¹

22.
Safe arrival
of the
American
convoy in
Brest har-
bour.

¹ Jom. v.
291.

Lord Howe gained so decisive a success from the adoption of the same principle which gave victory to Frederic at Leuthen, to Napoleon at Austerlitz, and to Wellington at Salamanca,—viz., to direct an overwhelming force against one-half of the enemy's force, and make the attack obliquely, keeping the weather-gage of the enemy, to render

23.
Tactics by
which the
victory was
gained.

* The prisoners taken in the prizes were 2300; the killed and wounded in them 1270, besides 320 who went down in the *Vengeur*.—BARROW'S *Life of Howe*, 236.

† The following were the respective guns and weight of metal in this memorable battle:—

	British.	French.
Number of guns,	1,087	1,107
Weight of metal,	22,976	28,126
Number of men,	17,241	19,989
Tons,	46,962	52,010

JAMES'S *Naval History*, i. 142.

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¹ Jom. v.
288. Ann.
Reg. p. 344.

it impossible for the ships to leeward to work up to the assistance of those engaged. By this means he reduced one-half of the enemy's fleet to be the passive spectator of the destruction of the other.¹ His mode of attack, which brought his whole squadron at once into action with the enemy, seems clearly preferable to that adopted by Nelson at Trafalgar, in sailing down in perpendicular lines; for that exposed the leading ships to imminent danger before the succeeding ones came up. Had he succeeded in penetrating the enemy's line at all points, or his captains implicitly obeyed his directions in that particular, and engaged the whole to leeward, he would have brought twenty ships of the line to Spithead. To a skilful and intrepid squadron, who do not fear to engage at the cannon-mouth with their enemy, such a manœuvre offers even greater chances of success at sea than at land, because the complete absence of obstacles on the level expanse of water enables the attacking squadron to calculate with more certainty upon reaching their object; and the advantage of the wind, if once obtained, renders it proportionally difficult for one part of the enemy's line to be brought up to the relief of the other. The introduction of steam-vessels of war, either as light ships, or as forming the line of battle itself, promises to assimilate still more closely actions at sea to those at land, and, by always putting it in the power of the superior force to bring its opponents to close action, and intercept their retreat, promises yet greater and more uniform results to the daring tactics of Howe and Nelson.

24.
Its Great
moral effect
in Great
Britain.

Never was a victory more seasonable than Lord Howe's to the British government. The war, preceded as it had been by violent party divisions in Great Britain, had been regarded with lukewarm feelings by a large portion of the people; and the friends of freedom dared not wish for the success of the British arms, lest it should extinguish the dawn of liberty in the world. But the Reign of Terror had shocked the best feelings of all the respectable portion

of this party; the execution of Louis had caused the film to drop from the eyes of the most blinded; and the victory of 1st June captivated the affections of the patriotic multitude. The ancient but half-extinguished loyalty of the British people wakened at the sound of their victorious cannon; and the hereditary rivalry of the two nations revived at so signal a triumph over the Republican arms. From this period may be dated the commencement of that firm union among the inhabitants of the country, and that ardent enthusiasm in the contest, which soon extinguished the seeds of former dissension, and ultimately carried the British empire triumphant through the severest struggles which had engaged the nation since the Conquest.¹

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¹ Ann. Reg.
p. 282, 283.

Vast were the preparations for war made by the Committee of Public Salvation in France. Her territory resembled an immense camp. The decrees of the 23d August and 5th September had precipitated the whole youth of the Republic to the frontiers, and twelve hundred thousand men in arms were prepared to obey the sovereign mandates of the Convention. After deducting from this immense force the garrisons, the troops destined to the service of the interior, and the sick, upwards of seven hundred thousand were ready to act on the offensive—a force much greater than all the European monarchies, taken together, could bring forward to meet them. These enormous armies, though in part but little experienced, were greatly improved in discipline since the conclusion of the preceding campaign. The months of winter had been sedulously employed in instructing them in the rudiments of the military art; the glorious successes at the close of the year had revived the spirit of conquest among the soldiers, and the whole were directed by a central government, possessing in the highest degree the advantage of unity of action and consummate military talent. Wielding at command so immense a military force, the Committee of Public Salvation were prodigal of the blood

25.

Vast military preparations of the French, and their system of war.

CHAP. of their soldiers. To advance incessantly to the attack,
 XVI. to bring up column after column, till the enemy were
 1794. wearied out, or overpowered, to regard as nothing any losses which led to the advance of the Republican standards, were the maxims on which they conducted the war. No other power could venture upon such an expenditure of life, because none had such inexhaustible resources at their disposal. Money and men abounded in every quarter; the camps were overflowing with conscripts, the fortresses with artillery, the treasury with assignats. The preceding campaign had cost above £100,000,000 sterling, but the resources of government were undiminished. Three-fourths of the whole property of France was at its disposal; and on this vast fund a paper currency was issued, possessing a forced circulation, and amply sufficient for the most prodigal expenditure. The value of assignats in circulation, in the course of the year 1794, was not less than £236,000,000 sterling, and there was no appearance of its diminution. The rapid depreciation of this paper, arising from the enormous profusion with which it was issued, was nothing to a power which enforced its mandates by the guillotine; the government creditor was compelled to receive it at par; and it signified nothing to them though he lost his whole fortune in the next exchange with any citizen of the Republic.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
 322, 324,
 345. Toul.
 iv. 321.
 Jom. v. 28,
 30. Th. vi.
 271, 272.
 Hist. Parl.
 xxvi. 431,
 437.

26.
 Talent with
 which their
 military
 force was
 wielded.

What rendered this military force still more formidable was the ability with which it was conducted, and the talent which was evidently rising up among its ranks. The genius of Carnot had from the very commencement selected the officers of greatest capacity from among the multitude who presented themselves; and their rapid transference from one situation to another gave ample opportunities for discovering who were the men on whom reliance could really be placed. The whole ability of France, in consequence of the extinction of civil employment, was centred in the army, and indefatigable exertions were everywhere made to communicate to headquarters

the names of the young men who had distinguished themselves in any grade. The central government, guided by that able statesman, had discovered the real secret of military operations, and, by accumulating an overwhelming force upon one part of the enemy's line, soon acquired a decided superiority over the Austrians, who adhered with blind obstinacy to the system of extending their forces. In the prosecution of this mode of action, the French had peculiar advantages from the unity of their government, the central situation of their forces, the interior line on which they acted, the fortified towns which guarded their frontier, and the unbounded means of repairing losses which they possessed. On the other hand, the Allies, acting on an exterior circle, paralysed by divisions among their sovereigns, and at a distance from their resources, were unable either to combine for any vigorous offensive operations, or render each other any assistance when pressed by the enemy. Incredible efforts were made at the same time to organise and equip this prodigious body of soldiers. "A revolution," said Barère, "must rapidly supply all our wants. It is to the human mind what the sun of Africa is to vegetation. Monarchies require peace, but a republic can exist only in warlike energy. Slaves have need of repose, but freemen of the fermentation of freedom; regular governments of rest, but the French Republic of revolutionary activity." The Ecole Militaire at Paris was speedily re-established, and the youth of the better classes marched on foot from all parts of France, to be there instructed in the rudiments of the military art; one horse out of twenty-five was everywhere levied from those persons possessing them, and the proprietor received only nine hundred francs in paper, hardly equivalent, from its depreciation, to a louis in gold. By these means, albeit ruinous to individuals, the cavalry and artillery were furnished with horses, and a considerable body of educated young men was rapidly provided for the army.¹ The manufactories of arms at Paris and in the provinces were

¹Th. vi. 247,
272. Jom. v.
32. Carnot,
32. Hard.
ii. 457.

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27.
Mr Pitt's
efforts to
hold toge-
ther the
alliance.

kept in incessant activity ; artificial means were universally adopted for the production of saltpetre, and gunpowder in immense quantities was daily forwarded to the armies.

Indefatigable were the exertions made by Mr Pitt to provide a force on the part of the Allies capable of combating this gigantic foe ; and never were the efforts of his master-spirit more required to heal the divisions and extinguish the jealousies which had arisen in the coalition. Poland was the apple of discord which had called forth these separate interests and awakened these jealousies ; and, in the plans of aggrandisement, which all the great Continental states were pursuing in regard to that unhappy country, is to be found the true secret of their neglect of the great task of combating the French Revolution, and of its rapid and early success. Prussia, intent on territorial acquisition on the shores of the Vistula, and desirous above everything of securing Dantzic, the key to that stream, and the great emporium of the grain commerce in the north of Europe, had already assembled forty thousand men under the King in person, for the siege of Warsaw ; and the cabinet of Berlin, unable to bear at the same time the expense of a costly war on the eastern and western frontiers of the monarchy, had in consequence greatly diminished their forces on the Rhine, and openly announced their intention of reducing them to the contingent which they were bound to furnish as a member of the empire, which was only twenty thousand men. Orders had even been despatched to Marshal Moellendorf, who commanded their army on the Rhine, to retreat by divisions towards the Elbe ; while at the same time, with preposterous inconsistency, Frederick William addressed a letter to the Arch-Chancellor of the Empire, in which he bewailed in piteous terms the public danger, and urged the immediate convocation of the Anterior circles, to deliberate on the most effectual means of withstanding the revolutionary torrent with which they were menaced.^{1*}

March 11.

Jan. 31.

¹ Hard. ii.
488, 490.

* "As it is impossible for me," said the King in that letter, "any longer to

The cabinet of Vienna was greatly alarmed at this official declaration of the intention of the Prussian government to withdraw from the coalition; and their chagrin was not diminished by the clear perception which they had, that this untimely and discreditable defection was mainly prompted by a desire to secure a share in the partition of Poland, of which they saw little prospect of themselves being allowed to participate. They used the most pressing instances, therefore, to induce the cabinet of Berlin to change their resolution, offered to take a large portion of the Prussian troops into their own pay, provided the other states of Germany would take upon themselves the charges of the remainder, and even urged the formation of a *levée en masse* in all the circles of the empire, immediately threatened with invasion, in order to combat the redoubtable forces which France was pouring forth from all ranks of her population. Austria, however, though so desirous to stimulate others to these last and convulsive efforts, made no attempt to rouse their emulation by setting the example of similar exertions herself. Not a regiment was added to the Imperial armies; and the Prussian cabinet, little solicitous to behold the whole population of the empire combating under the banners of the Cæsars, strenuously resisted the proposal as useless, dangerous, and utterly inconsistent with the principles of the contest in which they were engaged.¹

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28.

Efforts of
the cabinet
of Vienna to
prevent the
secession of
Prussia.¹ Hard. ii.
481, 488.
Jom. v. 29.
Th. vi. 269.

It soon appeared how ruinous to the common cause this unexpected secession of Prussia would be. The

continue at my own charges a war so remote from the frontiers of my dominions, and attended with so heavy an expense, I have candidly explained my situation to the principal allied powers, and engaged in negotiations with them, which are still in dependence. I am, in consequence, under the necessity of applying to the empire to provide for the cost of my army, if its longer continuance on the theatre of war is deemed essential to the common defence. I implore your Excellency, therefore, that, in your quality of Arch-Chancellor of the Empire, you will forthwith convoke the Anterior circles. An immediate provision for my troops, at the expense of these circles, is the only means which remains of saving the empire in the terrible crisis which is approaching; and, unless that step is forthwith taken, they can no longer be employed in the common cause, and I must order them, with regret, to bend their steps towards their own frontier, leaving the empire to its own resources."²

² Hard. ii.
488, 490.

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29.

Prussia
openly be-
gins to with-
draw.

March 14.

Republican forces in Flanders were nearly a hundred and sixty thousand strong; and Mack, who was intrusted with the chief direction of the campaign by the allied powers, finding that the whole forces which the Allies could assemble in that quarter would not exceed a hundred and fifty thousand, had strongly urged the necessity of obtaining the co-operation of fifty thousand Prussians, in order to cover the Meuse, in conjunction with the Austrian divisions in the neighbourhood of Luxembourg. The Prussians under Moellendorf were cantoned on the two banks of the Seltz, between Oppenheim and Mayence; but when he received the letter from Prince Cobourg requesting his co-operation, he replied in cold and ambiguous terms, "That he was not acquainted with the share which his government may have taken in the formation of the proposed plan of operations; that the views on which it was founded appeared unexceptionable, but that, in the existing state of affairs, it was attended with inconveniences, and that he could not consent to the march to Treves, lest he should expose Mayence." These declarations of the intentions of Prussia excited the greater sensation in Europe, that, ever since the war began, it had been supposed that the cabinets of Berlin and Vienna were united in the closest bonds of alliance, and the Convention of Pilnitz was universally regarded as the true basis of the anti-revolutionary coalition. The confederacy appeared to be on the verge of dissolution. Stimulated by the pressing dangers of his situation, the Elector of Mayence, who of all the Germanic powers was exposed to the first attack of the Revolutionists, was indefatigable in his efforts to prevent the withdrawal of the Prussian troops, and, by his exertions, a proposition was favourably received by the diet of the empire for taking them into the pay of the lesser powers. Marshal Moellendorf soon after received orders to suspend his retreat.¹

March 20.

April 7.

¹ Hard. ii.
480, 481,
501, 502.

This change in the Prussian plans arose from the vast exertions which Mr Pitt at this period made to hold

together the bands of the confederacy. Alone of all the statesmen of his day, the British minister perceived the full extent of the danger which menaced Europe, from the spreading of the revolutionary torrent over the adjoining states, and the immense peril of this speedily coming to pass, from the divisions which were breaking out among the allied powers, caused by the distraction of interests. No sooner, therefore, was he informed of the intended defection of Prussia, than he exerted all his influence to bring back the cabinet of Berlin to more rational sentiments, and liberally advanced the treasures of Britain to retain the Prussian troops in a contest so vital to none as to Prussia herself. By his exertions a treaty was signed at the Hague between Prussia, Holland, and Great Britain ; by which it was stipulated that Prussia should retain an army of sixty-two thousand veterans in the field ; while the two latter should furnish a subsidy of £50,000 a-month, besides £400,000 for putting the army into a fit condition to undertake a campaign, and £1, 12s. a-month to each man, as an equivalent for the expenses of his maintenance while engaged in active service. By a separate article, it was provided, "that all conquests made by this army, shall be made in the names of the two maritime powers, and shall remain at their disposal during the course of the war, and at the peace shall be made such use of as they shall deem proper."¹

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30.

But is at length retained in the alliance by a treaty with Great Britain.

April 19.

¹ Parl. Hist. xxxi. 433, 435. Hard. ii. 504, 505. Martens, v. 610.

However meritorious were the exertions of Mr Pitt, in thus again bringing Prussia into the field, after its government had formally announced the intention of withdrawing from the confederacy, it was in part foreseen—what the event soon demonstrated—that the succours stipulated from that power would prove of the most inefficient description, and that nothing was to be expected from the troops of a leading state engaged as hirelings contrary to the national feelings, and the secret inclinations of the government, in what they deemed a foreign cause.* The

31.

Discontent thus excited in the Prussian army.

* It was asked in the House of Peers, with a too prophetic spirit, by the

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discontent of the troops was loudly proclaimed, when it transpired that they were to be transferred to the pay of Great Britain ; and they openly murmured at the disgrace of having the soldiers of the Great Frederic sold like mercenaries to a foreign power. The troops came to the field in terms of the convention, but their gallant officers were fettered by secret instructions, which rendered them of little real service ; and the Prussian army had neither earned credit to itself, nor accomplished benefit for the common cause, by its conduct in the field, before the cabinet of Berlin formally withdrew from the alliance.

32.
Plan of the
campaign
formed by
General
Mack.
Forces of
the two
parties.

General Mack, whose subsequent and unexampled misfortunes should not exclude the recollection of the abilities, in a particular department, which he really possessed, was intrusted by the Austrian and British governments with the preparation of the plan of the campaign ; and he proposed one which bore the marks of decided talent, and which, if vigorously carried into effect by a sufficient force, promised the most brilliant results. This was to complete the opening through the French barrier by the capture of Landrecies ; and, having done so, march with the whole allied army in Flanders, 160,000 strong, straight by Laon on Paris ; while the Prussian forces, by a forward movement on the side of Namur, supported the operation. "With 150,000 men," said he, "I would push forward a strong advanced guard to Paris ; with 200,000 I would engage to remain there." He proposed that West Flanders should be inundated by troops at the same time, so that the main army, in the course of its perilous advance, should have no disquietude for its flank

Marquis of Lansdowne, "Could the King of Prussia, ought the King of Prussia, to divest himself of his natural duties ? Could it be expected that he would fulfil engagements so trivial in comparison ? Was not Poland likely to furnish him employment for his troops, and that, too, at his own door ? There never were two powers hated one another more cordially than Prussia and Austria, and were English guineas likely to allay the discord ? Was it not probable that Frederick William would take our subsidies, but find prettexts for evading the performance of anything in return worthy of the name ?"¹—*Parl. Hist.* xxxi. 456, 458.

¹ Hard. ii.
504, 507.

and rear. This plan was ably conceived, and was evidently the one which should have been adopted in the preceding campaign ; but it was not adopted, in consequence of the strong remonstrances of the inhabitants of West Flanders against a measure which promised to render their province the theatre of war, and the jealousy of the Prussian government, which precluded any effectual co-operation from being obtained on that side of the line. This left the whole weight of the contest to fall on the Austrians and British, whose forces were not of sufficient numerical strength for the struggle.* Unaware of the immense military resources and ascending spirit of their adversaries, the Allies resolved to capture Landrecies, and from that base march directly to Paris. Preparatory to this movement, their whole army was, on the 16th April, reviewed by the Emperor of Austria on the plains of Cateau ; they amounted to nearly a hundred and fifty thousand men, and were particularly distinguished by the superb appearance of the cavalry, constituting a force apparently capable of conquering the world.¹

Instead of profiting by this immense assemblage of strength to fall upon the still scattered, and, in part, undisciplined forces of their enemies, the troops were on the following day divided into eight columns, to oppose the French forces, which were still divided in that manner. The siege of Landrecies was shortly after formed, while a large portion of the allied army was stationed as a covering force. After ten days of open trenches, and a most severe bombardment, which almost totally destroyed the town, this important fortress capitulated, and the garrison,

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¹ Hard. ii.
478, 522,
528. Ann.
Reg. p. 328,
330. Jom.
v. 34, 58.
Th. vi. 270,
285.

33.
Landrecies
taken.
Efforts of
the Repub-
licans to
raise the
siege.
Defeat of
the French
at Troisville.

* The armies were disposed as follows :—

French.			Allies.		
Army of the North,	.	220,000	Flanders,	.	140,000
Moselle and Rhine,	.	280,000	Duke of York,	.	40,000
Alps,	.	60,000	Austrians on the Rhine,	.	60,000
Eastern Pyrenees,	.	80,000	Prussians on ditto,	.	65,000
Western ditto,	.	80,000	Luxembourg,	.	20,000
South,	.	60,000	Emigrants,	.	12,000
780,000			337,000 ^a		

^a Jom. v. 29,
32. Ann.
Reg. 322.

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April 26.

consisting of five thousand men, was made prisoners of war. During the progress of this attack, the French generals, stimulated by the orders of the Committee of Public Salvation, made reiterated efforts to raise the siege. Their endeavours were much aided by the absurd adherence of the Allies to the old plan of dividing their forces ; they trembled at the thoughts of leaving a single road open, as if the fate of the war depended upon closing every avenue into Flanders, when they were contemplating a march to Paris. The plan of the Republicans consisted in a series of attacks on the posts and corps forming the long cordon of the Allies, followed by a serious advance of the two wings, the one towards Philipville, the other towards Dunkirk. On the 26th April, the movement in advance took place along the whole line. The centre, which advanced against the Duke of York near Cambray, experienced the most bloody reverses. When the Republicans arrived at the redoubts of Troisville, defended by the Duke of York, they were vigorously received by the British guards in front, supported by PRINCE SCHWARTZENBERG, afterwards so well known as generalissimo of the allied forces, commanding a regiment of Austrian cuirassiers ; while General Otto assailed them in flank at the head of the British cavalry, led by the 15th hussars, which drove headlong through their whole line by a most brilliant charge, and completed their rout. Not in the whole Peninsular war was a more splendid display of the power of cavalry made than on this occasion ; if it had been followed up with vigour, the French army would have been totally defeated. As it was, the whole centre was driven back in confusion to Cambray, with the loss of thirty-five pieces of cannon, and above four thousand men. While this disaster was experienced

¹ Jom. v. 55,
57. Ann.
Reg. p. 329.
Th. vi. 286,
287.

on the left-centre of the French army, their right-centre was not more successful.¹ That portion of them at first gained some advantage over the corps of the Austrians, who there composed the covering force ; but the latter

having been reinforced, and supported by a numerous artillery, resumed the offensive, and repulsed the assailants with great loss.

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But these advantages, how considerable soever, were counterbalanced by a severe check experienced by General Clairfait, whose corps formed the extreme right of the allied line. On that side the Republicans had assembled fifty thousand men under Souham and Moreau, which, on the 25th April, advanced against the Austrian forces. Assailed by superior numbers, Clairfait was driven back to Tournay, with the loss of thirty pieces of cannon, and twelve hundred prisoners. His retreat seemed to render wholly desperate the situation of a brigade of three thousand Hanoverians, now shut up in Menin, and soon furiously bombarded. But their brave commander, supported by the resolution of a large body of French emigrants who were attached to his corps, resolved to cut his way through the besiegers, and, through the heroic valour of his followers, successfully accomplished his object. Prince Cobourg, upon the intelligence of this misfortune, detached the Duke of York to Tournay to support Clairfait, and remained with the rest of his forces in the neighbourhood of Landrecies, to put that place in a state of defence.¹

34.
Defeat of
Clairfait.
April 25.

¹Jom. v. 61,
62. Th. vi.
288, 289.

Convinced by the failure of their attacks on the centre of the Allies, that their forces were insufficient in that quarter, the Committee of Public Salvation, relying on the inactivity and lukewarmness of the Prussians on the extreme right of their vast line of operations, took the energetic resolution of ordering Jourdan to reinforce the army of the Moselle with fifteen thousand men drawn from the Rhine, and, after leaving a corps of observation at Luxembourg, to march with forty-five thousand men upon the Ardenne forest, and unite himself to the army on the Sambre. This bold conception of strengthening, to an overwhelming degree, what appeared the decisive point of the long line of operations, and throwing ninety thousand

35.
Jourdan
ordered up
from the
Rhine to the
Sambre.

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men on its extreme left on the Sambre, had a most important effect on the future fate of the campaign ; and formed a striking contrast to the measures of the Allies, who deemed themselves insecure, even when meditating offensive operations, unless the whole avenues of the country they occupied were equally guarded by detached corps. The defection of Prussia, which daily became more evident, prevented them from obtaining any co-operation on their own left flank to counteract this change in the enemy's line of attack ; while, even in their own part of the line, the movements were vacillating, and totally unworthy of the splendid force at their disposal. On the 10th May, Clairfait, without any co-operation from the other parts of the line, crossed the Lys, and attacked the Republican troops around the town of Cambray. An obstinate engagement ensued, with various success, which was continued on the succeeding day, without any decisive advantage having been gained by either party. Four thousand men were lost on each side, and the opposing forces remained much where they had been at their commencement—a striking proof of the murderous and indecisive nature of this warfare of posts, which, without any adequate success, occasioned an incessant consumption of human life.¹

¹ Th. vi. 290.
Jom. v. 62,
63. Hard.
ii. 532.

36.
Indecisive
actions on
the Sambre,
which at
length ter-
minate to
the disad-
vantage of
the French.

But the period was now approaching when the genius of Carnot was to infuse a new element into this indecisive warfare. On the 10th May, the French army on the Sambre crossed that river, with the design of executing his plan of operations ; but the Allies having collected their forces to cover the important city of Mons, and taken post at a fortified position at Grandrengs, a furious battle ensued, which terminated in the Republicans being defeated and driven across the same river with the loss of ten pieces of cannon, and four thousand men. But the French having remained masters of the bridges over the river, and being urged by St Just and Lebas, who threatened their generals with the guillotine if they were not victorious, again crossed on the 20th, and returned to

the charge. But they kept so bad a look-out that, on the 24th, they were surprised and completely routed by the Austrians, under Prince Kaunitz. The whole army was flying in confusion to the bridges, when KLÉBER, destined to future celebrity, arrived in time with fresh troops to arrest the victorious enemy, and preserve the army from total destruction. As it was, however, they were a second time driven over the Sambre, with the loss of four thousand men, and twenty-five pieces of artillery.¹

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May 24.

¹ Jom. v. 66,

79, 83, 85.

Toul. iv.

320, 322.

Th. vi. 291,

292. Ann.

Reg. 331.

While blood was flowing in such torrents on the banks of the Sambre, events of still greater importance occurred in West Flanders. The Allies had there collected ninety thousand men, including one hundred and thirty-three squadrons, under the immediate command of the Emperor; and the situation of the left wing of the French suggested the design of cutting it off from the main body of the army, and forcing it back upon the sea, where it could have no alternative but to surrender. For this purpose, their troops were divided into six columns, which were moved by concentric lines on the French corps posted at Turcoing. Had they acted with more concert, and moved on a better line, the attack would have been crowned with the most splendid success. But the old system of dividing their forces made it terminate in nothing but disaster. The different columns, some of which were separated from each other by no less than twenty leagues, did not arrive simultaneously at the point of attack: and although each singly acted vigorously when brought into action, there was not the unity in their operations requisite to success. Some inconsiderable advantages were gained near Turcoing on the 17th; but the Republicans, having now concentrated their troops in a central position, were enabled to fall with an overwhelming force on the insulated columns of their adversaries.²

37.

Preparations for a general battle in West Flanders.

May 16.

² Jom. v. 86,

97. Toul.

iv. 322.

Ann. Reg.

332.

At three in the morning of the 18th, General Souham, with forty-five thousand, attacked the detached corps of General Otto and the Duke of York, while another corps

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38.

Battle of
Turcoing.
May 18.

of fifteen thousand advanced against them from the side of Lisle. The first, that of General Otto, was defeated with great loss ; the latter, though it at first defended itself with vigour, finding its communication cut off with the remainder of the army, and surrounded by a greatly superior force, disbanded and took to flight—a circumstance which ultimately proved fortunate, as, had they maintained their ground, they certainly would have been made prisoners. So sudden was the rout, that the Duke of York himself owed his safety to the fleetness of his horse—a circumstance which, much to his credit, he had the candour to admit in his official despatch. Such was the defect of the combinations of Prince Cobourg, that, at the time that his central columns were thus overwhelmed by an enormous mass of sixty thousand men, the two columns in his rear, amounting to not less than thirty thousand, under the Archduke Charles and Kinsky, remained in a state of absolute inaction. At the same time Clairfait, with seventeen thousand on the left, who came up too late to take any active part in the engagement, was obliged to retire, after capturing seven pieces of cannon—a poor compensation for the total rout of the centre, and the moral disadvantages of a defeat. In this action, where the Allies lost three thousand men, and sixty pieces of cannon, the superiority of the French generalship was very apparent. Inferior, upon the whole, to the mass of their opponents, they had greatly the advantage in numbers at the point of attack. It must be admitted, however, that, after having pierced the centre, they should have reaped something more from their victory than the bare possession of the field of battle.¹

¹ Jom. v. 86,
97, 98.
Toul. iv.
322. Ann.
Reg. 332.
Th. vi. 295,
296. Hard.
ii. 536-7.

39.
Fresh in-
decisive
actions.
May 22.

On the 22d May, Pichegru, who now assumed the command, renewed the attack, with a force now raised by successive additions to nearly one hundred thousand men, with the intention of forcing the passage of the Scheldt, besieging Tournay, and capturing a convoy which was ascending that river. They at first succeeded in driving

in the outposts ; but a reinforcement of British troops, commanded by General Fox, and seven Austrian battalions, having arrived to support the Hanoverians in that quarter, a desperate and bloody conflict ensued, in which the firmness of the British at length prevailed over the impetuosity of their adversaries, and the village of Pont-à-chin, which was the point of contest between them, finally remained in their hands. The battle continued from five in the morning till nine at night, when it terminated by a general charge of the Allies, which drove the enemy from the field.* In this action, which was one of the most obstinately contested of the campaign, the French lost above six thousand men ; but such was the fatigue of the victors, after an engagement of such severity and duration, that they were unable to follow up their success. Twenty thousand men had fallen on the two sides in these murderous battles, but no decisive advantage, and hardly a foot of ground, had been gained by either party. Finding that he could make no impression in this quarter, Pichegru resolved to carry the theatre of war into West Flanders, where the country, intersected by hedges, was less favourable to the allied cavalry, and he, in consequence, laid siege to Ipres. About the same time, the Emperor conducted ten thousand men in person to reinforce the army on the Sambre ; and the right wing of the Allies, thus weakened, remained in a defensive position near Tournay, which was fortified with the utmost care.¹

The indecisive results of these bloody actions, which clearly demonstrated the great strength of the Republicans, and the desperate strife which awaited the Allies, in any attempt to conquer a country abounding in such defenders, produced an important change in the Austrian

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¹ Ann. Reg.
333. Th. vi.
297. Hard.
ii. 537, 538.
Jom. v. 98,
104. Toul.
iv. 322.

40.
The Austrian cabinet in secret contemplate the exchange of Flanders for Bavaria, or some Italian province.

* The Emperor Francis was on horseback for twelve hours during this bloody day, incessantly traversing the ranks, and animating the soldiers to continue their exertions.—“Courage, my friends!” said he, when they appeared about to sink : “yet a few more exertions, and the victory is our own.”—HARD. ii. 538.

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councils. Thugut, who was essentially patriotic in his ideas, and reluctantly embarked in any contest which did not evidently conduce to the advantage of the hereditary states, had long nourished a secret aversion to the war in Flanders. He could not disguise from himself that these provinces, how opulent and important soever in themselves, contributed little to the real strength of the monarchy : that their situation, far removed from Austria, and close to France, rendered it highly probable that they would, at some no very distant period, become the prey of that enterprising power ; and that the charge of defending them, at so great a distance from the strength of the hereditary states, entailed an enormous and ruinous expense upon the Imperial finances. Impressed with these ideas, he had for some time been revolving in his mind the project of abandoning these distant provinces to their fate, and looking out for a compensation to Austria in Italy or Bavaria, where its new acquisition might lie adjacent to the hereditary states. This long remained a fixed principle in the Imperial councils ; and in these vague ideas is to be found the remote cause of the Treaty of Campo-Formio, and appropriation of Venice.¹

¹ Hard. ii.
539, 540.

41.

A council of
state is held
on this pro-
ject.
May 24.

Two days after the battle of Turcoing, a council of state was secretly held at the Imperial headquarters, to deliberate on the measures to be pursued for the future progress of the war. The opportunity appeared favourable to that able statesman to bring forward his long-cherished project. The inactivity and lukewarmness of the Prussians, notwithstanding the British subsidy, too plainly demonstrated that no reliance could be placed on their co-operation ; the recent desperate actions in West Flanders sufficiently proved that no serious impression was to be made in that quarter ; while the reluctance of the Flemish states to contribute anything to the common cause, and the evident partiality of a large party amongst them for the French alliance, rendered it a matter of great doubt whether it was expedient, on behalf of such

distant, fickle, and disaffected subjects, to maintain any longer a contest, which, if unsuccessful, might engulf half the forces of the monarchy. These considerations were forcibly impressed upon the mind of the young Emperor, who, born and bred in Tuscany, entertained no partiality for his distant Flemish possessions. Mack supported them with all the weight of his opinion, and strongly urged "that it was better to retire altogether across the Rhine, while yet the strength of the army was unbroken, than run the risk of its being buried in the fields of Belgium. If Flanders was of such value to the cause of European independence, it lay upon England, Prussia, and Holland, in the centre of whose dominions it lay, to provide measures for its defence : but the real interests of Austria lay nearer home, and her battalions required to be seen in dense array on the Maritime Alps, or on the shores of the Vistula, where vast and fertile provinces were about to fall a prey to her ambitious neighbours. Should affairs in that quarter assume a favourable aspect, and the revolutionary fervour of the Republic exhaust itself, it would apparently be no difficult matter to recover the Belgic provinces, as Prince Cobourg had done in the preceding campaign ; or, if this should unhappily prove impossible, it was much more likely that a successful defensive war could be maintained with the resources of the empire concentrated round its heart, than when they were so largely accumulated in a distant possession ; or, if peace became desirable, it could at any time be readily purchased by the cession of provinces so valuable to France, and the acquisition of an equivalent nearer the Austrian dominions."¹

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¹ Hard. ii.
539, 543.

The subject was debated with the deliberation which its importance deserved ; and it was at length determined by the majority of the council, that the maintenance of so burdensome and hazardous a war for such disaffected and distant possessions, was at variance with the vital interests of the state. It was resolved, accord-

42.
The abandonment of Flanders is resolved on by the Austrian cabinet.

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¹ Hard. ii.
539, 543,
545.

ingly, that the Imperial troops should, as soon as decency would permit, be withdrawn from Flanders; that this resolution should in the mean time be kept a profound secret, and, to cover the honour of the Imperial arms, a general battle should be hazarded, and on its issue should depend the course thereafter to be adopted; but that, in the mean time, the Emperor should forthwith depart for Vienna, to take cognisance of the affairs of Poland, which called for instant attention. In conformity with this resolution, he set out shortly after for that capital, leaving Cobourg in command of the army.¹

43.

The French again cross the Sambre, invest Charleroi, and are driven back.
May 28.

Meanwhile the Commissioners of the Convention, little anticipating the favourable turn which their affairs were about to take from the divisions of the Allies, nothing daunted by the reverses the army of the Sambre had experienced, were continually stimulating its generals to fresh exertions. In vain they represented that the soldiers, worn out with fatigue, without shoes, without clothing, stood much in need of repose. "To-morrow," said St Just, "the Republic must have a victory: choose between a battle and a siege." Constrained by authorities who enforced their arguments by the guillotine, the Republican generals prepared for a third expedition across the Sambre. Towards the end of May, Kléber made the attempt with troops still exhausted by fatigue, and almost starving. The consequences were such as might have been expected; the grenadiers were repulsed by the grape-shot of the enemy, and General Duhesme was routed with little difficulty. On the 29th, however, the indomitable Republicans returned to the charge, and, after an obstinate engagement, succeeded in forcing back the Imperialists, and immediately began the investment of Charleroi. But the arrival of the Emperor with ten thousand troops, having raised the allied force in that quarter to thirty-five thousand men, it was resolved to make an effort to raise the siege before Jourdan arrived with the army of the Moselle, which was hourly expected.²

June 3.
² Toul. iv.
322. Jom.
v. 103, 109,
113.

The attack was made on the 3d June, and attended with complete success ; the French having been driven across the Sambre, with the loss of two thousand men. But this check was of little importance: on the day following Jourdan arrived from the Moselle with forty thousand fresh troops.

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This great reinforcement thrown into the scale, when the contending parties were so nearly balanced, was decisive of the fate of the campaign, and proves the sagacity with which Carnot acted in accumulating an overwhelming force on this point. In a few days the Republicans recrossed the river with sixty thousand men, resumed the siege of Charleroi, and soon destroyed a strong redoubt which constituted the principal defence of

44.
Arrival of
Jourdan
with 40,000
men, invest-
ment of
Charleroi,
and separa-
tion of the
Austrians
and British.
June 12.
June 16.

the besieged. The imminent danger to which the city was reduced by the attack of this great force, induced the Allies to make the utmost efforts to raise the siege. But this required no less skill than intrepidity; for their army did not exceed thirty-five thousand men, while the French were nearly double that number. On this occasion, the system of attack by detached columns was for once successful. The Republicans were pierced by a simultaneous effort of two of the allied columns, defeated, and driven over the Sambre, with the loss of three thousand men. This success, highly honourable as it was to the Austrian arms, proved in the end prejudicial to their cause, as it induced Prince Cobourg to suppose that his left wing was now sufficiently secure, and to detach all his disposable troops to the succour of Clairfait and Ipres on the right, whereas it was against the other flank that the principal forces of the Republicans were now directed. In effect, on the 18th June, the French army recrossed the Sambre for the fifth, and commenced the bombardment of Charleroi for the third time. The great force with which this attack was made, amounting to seventy thousand men, rendered it evident that Prince Cobourg had mistaken the point which required support, and that it was on the

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Sambre, and under the walls of Charleroi, that the decisive battle for the protection of Flanders was to be fought, Accordingly, the major part of the allied forces were at length moved in that direction ; the Duke of York, with the British and Hanoverians, being left alone on the Scheldt, at a short distance from Clairfait, who had recently experienced the most overwhelming reverses. This separation of the forces of the two nations contributed not a little to augment the misunderstanding which already prevailed between them, and was the forerunner of numberless disasters to all.¹

¹ Jom. v.
132, 133.
Th. vi. 395,
397. Ann.
Reg. 333.

45.
Pichegru
attacks
Clairfait.

No sooner was the departure of the Emperor with reinforcements to the army on the Sambre known to Pichegru, than he resolved to take advantage of the weakness of his adversaries, by prosecuting seriously the long-menaced siege of Ipres. Clairfait, not feeling himself in sufficient strength to interrupt his operations, remained long firm in his intrenched camp at Thielt. At length, however, the positive orders of his superiors compelled that able officer, even with the insufficient forces at his disposal, to make an attempt to raise the siege. It was arranged that this attack should be aided by a movement of the centre of the allied army to his support. But the design having been betrayed to the enemy at Lisle, was prevented from being carried into effect by a demonstration from the French centre by Pichegru. The consequence was, that the Austrian general was compelled to attack alone ; and, though his corps fought with their wonted valour, he was again worsted, and compelled to resume his position in his intrenchments, without having disturbed the operations of the siege. This was the fifth time that this brave officer had fought unsupported, while thirty thousand Austrians lay inactive at Tournay, and six thousand British, under Lord Moira, were reposing from the fatigues of their sea voyage at Ostend.² The consequence was, that Ipres capitulated a few days after, and its garrison, consisting of six thousand men, was

June 17.
² Jom. v.
119, 130.
Ann. Reg.
324.

made prisoners of war. Cobourg made a tardy movement for its relief ; but, hearing of its fall, returned on the 19th to Tournay.

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The Austrians having now, in pursuance of their plan of withdrawing from Flanders, finally detached themselves from the British, moved all their forces towards their left wing, with a view to succour Charleroi, which was severely pressed by Jourdan. On the 22d, Prince Cobourg joined his left wing, but, though the united forces were seventy-five thousand strong, he delayed till the 26th to attack the French army. Jourdan, who was fully aware of the importance of acquiring this fortress, took advantage of the respite which this delay afforded him to prosecute the siege with the utmost activity. This he did with such success, that, the batteries of the besieged having been silenced, the place capitulated on the evening of the 25th. Hardly had the garrison left the gates, when the discharge of artillery announced the tardy movement of the Austrians for its relief. The battle took place on the following day, on the plains of FLEURUS, already signalised by a victory of Marshal Luxembourg in 1690, and was attended by most important consequences.¹

46.
Imperialists
assemble to
succour
Charleroi.
June 22.

June 25.

June 26.
1 Jom. 5.
119, 137.
Ann. Reg.
334. Th.
vi. 393,
395, 396.

The French army, which was eighty-nine thousand strong, was posted in a semicircle round the town of Charleroi, now become, instead of a source of weakness, a *point d'appui* to the Republicans. Their position nearly resembled that of Napoleon at Leipsic ; but the superiority of force on that occasion secured a very different result to the Allies from that which now awaited their arms. The Imperialists, adhering to their system of attacking the enemy at all points, divided their forces into five columns, intending to assail at the same moment all parts of the Republican position—a mode of attack at all times hazardous, but especially so when an inferior is engaged with a superior force. The battle commenced on the 26th, at daybreak, and continued with great vigour throughout the whole day. The first column, under the command of

47.
Battle of
Fleurus.
June 26.

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the Prince of Orange, attacked the left of the French under General Montaigu, and drove them back to the village of Fontaine l'Evêque ; but the Republicans, being there reinforced by fresh troops, succeeded in maintaining their ground, and repulsed repeated charges of the Imperial cavalry. During a successful charge, however, the French horse were themselves assailed by the Austrian cuirassiers, and driven back in confusion upon the infantry, who gradually lost ground, and at length were compelled to fall back to the heights in front of Charleroi. The moment was critical, for the Austrians, following up their success, were on the point of carrying the village of Marchiennes-au-Pont, which would have intercepted the whole communications of the Republican army ; but Jourdan, alarmed at the advance of the enemy in this quarter, moved up Kléber, to support his left. That intrepid general hastily erected several batteries to meet the enemy's fire, and moved forward BERNADOTTE,* the future King of Sweden, at the head of several battalions, to the support of Montaigu. The Allies, under Latour and the Prince of Orange, being unsupported by the remainder of the army, and finding themselves vigorously assailed both in front and flank, fell back from their advanced position, and before four in the afternoon, all the ground gained in that quarter had been abandoned.¹

¹ Jom. v.
138, 143.
Toul. iv.
328, 330.
Th. vi. 399,
401.

48.
Obstinate
struggle in
the centre.

While these events were going forward on the left, the centre, where the village of Fleurus was occupied by sixteen thousand troops, and strongly strengthened by intrenchments, was the scene of an obstinate conflict. The attack in front of the Allies was successfully repulsed, after passing the village, by the fire of artillery on the heights in the rear : but General Beaulieu, with the left wing of the Allies, having attacked and carried the post of Lambusart on the French right, the Republicans on the left were compelled to give way ; and the important post of Fleurus, with its great redoubt, stood prominent in the

* See a biography of BERNADOTTE, chap. lxx. § 26.

midst of the allied forces, exposed to attack both in front and flank. The consequence of this was, that the great redoubt was on the point of being taken, and the French divisions in the centre were already in full retreat, when Jourdan hastened to the scene of danger with six battalions, who were formed in close columns, and checked the advance of the enemy. The French cavalry, under Dubois, made a furious charge upon the Imperial infantry, overthrew them, and captured fifty pieces of cannon ; but, being disordered by their rapid advance, they were immediately after attacked by the Austrian cuirassiers, who not only retook the whole artillery, but routed the victors, and drove them back in confusion upon their own lines.¹

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¹ Jom. v.
145, 146,
149. Toul.
iv. 332.
Th. vi. 401.

Meanwhile the allied left, under Beaulieu, made the most brilliant progress. After various attacks, the village of Lambusart was carried, and the enemy's forces, for the most part, driven across the Sambre ; but the vigorous fire of the French artillery prevented the Allies from debouching from the village, or obtaining complete success in that quarter. As it was, however, the situation of the Republicans was disadvantageous in every quarter. The right, under Moreau, was driven back, and in great part had recrossed the river ; the left, under Montaigu, had abandoned the field of battle, and retreated to Marchiennes-au-Pont ; while the forces in the centre had been in part compelled to recede, and the great redoubt was in danger of being carried. Four divisions only, those of Lefebvre, Championnet, Kléber, and Daurier, were in a condition to make head against the enemy. At this critical moment, when decisive success was within his grasp, Cobourg, hearing of the fall of Charleroi, and fettered by the secret instructions he had received, to risk as little as possible before retiring from Flanders, ordered a retreat at all points. Without detracting from the merit of Jourdan, it may safely be affirmed that, if the Prince of Orange, instead of drawing back his wing when he found it too far advanced,² had united with the centre to attack

49.
Success of
the Aus-
trians on
the left.

² Jom. v.
150, 152.
Th. vi. 401,
402. Toul.
iv. 332.

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Fleurus and the main body of the French army, while Beau-
lieu pressed them on the other side, the success would have
been rendered complete, and a glorious victory achieved.

50.
Allies re-
treat though
not defeated.

But nothing is so perilous as to evince any symptoms
of vacillation after a general engagement. The battle of
Fleurus, paralysed as success had been to the Austrians,
was, in fact, a drawn engagement ; the loss on both sides
was nearly equal, being between four thousand and five
thousand men to each side ; the French had given way on
both wings, the centre with difficulty maintained its ground ;
and the Imperialists only retreated because the fall of
Charleroi had removed the object for which they fought ;
and the secret instructions of their general precluded him
from adopting any course, how brilliant and inviting so-
ever, which promised to be attended with any hazard to the
army. Nevertheless, it was attended with the most disas-
trous consequences. The loss of Flanders immediately fol-
lowed a contest which an enterprising general would have
converted into the most decisive triumph. Cobourg retired
to Nivelles, and soon after took post at *Mont St Jean and*
Waterloo, at the entrance of the forest of Soignies, little
dreaming of the glorious event which, under a firmer com-
mander, and with the forces of a very differently united
alliance, was there destined to counterbalance all the evils
of which his prescribed retreat formed the commencement.
Two days afterwards, the French issued from their in-
trenchments round Charleroi, and at Mount Paliul de-
feated the allied rearguard, which fell back to Braine le
Comte. Mons was shortly after evacuated, and the Allies,
abandoning the whole fortresses which they had conquered
to their own resources, drew together in front of Brussels.
Several actions took place in the beginning of July, be-
tween the rearguard of the Allies and the French columns
at Mont St Jean, Braine l'Alleud, and Sambre ; but at
length, finding himself unable to maintain his position
without concentrating his forces, Prince Cobourg aban-
doned Brussels, and fell back behind the Dyle.¹

July 6 and 9.

¹ Jom. v.
152, 162.
Toul. iv.
336. Hard.
iii. 23, 24.
Th. vi. 405,
406.

It was not without the most strenuous exertions of the British government to prevent them, that these ruinous divisions broke out among the allied powers in Flanders. Immediately after the treaty of 19th April was signed, Lord Malmesbury, the British ambassador, set out from the Hague for Maestricht, where conferences were opened with the Prussian minister, Haugwitz, and the Dutch plenipotentiaries. Their object was to induce the Prussian forces to leave the banks of the Rhine, and hasten to the scene of decisive operations in Flanders. These demands were so reasonable, and so strictly in unison with the letter as well as spirit of the recent treaty, that the Prussian minister could not avoid agreeing to them, and engaged to procure orders from the cabinet of Berlin to that effect. But Moellendorf, acting in obedience to secret orders from his court, declined to obey the requisition of the plenipotentiaries, and engaged in a fruitless and feigned expedition towards Kayserslautern and Sarre Louis, at the very time that he was well aware that his antagonist, Jourdan, with forty thousand men, was hastening by forced marches to the decisive point on the banks of the Sambre. When the danger became more threatening, and the Emperor himself had repaired to the neighbourhood of Charleroi, to make head against the accumulating masses of the Republicans, the same requisitions were renewed, in a still more pressing strain, by the British and Dutch ministers.* But it was all in vain. The Prussian general betook himself to one subterfuge after another, alleging that, by menacing Sarre Louis and Landau, he succoured the common cause more effectually than if he brought his whole forces to the walls of Charleroi ; and at length, when driven from that pretext, he peremptorily refused to leave the banks of the Rhine. The ministers

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51.

Efforts of
the British
government
to hold to-
gether the
alliance.

* "It is not for nothing," said Lord Cornwallis and Kinckel, the Dutch minister, "that we pay you our subsidies, nor in order that the subsidised power should employ the paid forces for its own purposes. If the Prussian troops do not act for the common cause, they depart from the chief object of the treaty."—HARD. iii. 65.

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of the maritime powers upon this broke out into bitter complaints at the breach of faith on the part of the Prussian government, and reproached the marshal with a fact which they had recently discovered, that, instead of sixty-two thousand men, stipulated by the treaty, and paid for by the Allies, only thirty-two thousand received daily rations at the army. The bad faith of the Prussians was now apparent ; they were reproached with it. Moellendorf denied the charge ; recriminations issued on both sides : at length they separated mutually exasperated ; and Lord Cornwallis declared he would suspend the payment of the British subsidy.¹

¹ Hard. ii. 545, 547 ;
and iii. 5, 6,
7. Malmes.
Disp. ii. 7.

52.
Pichegru
drives back
Clairfait in
West Flan-
ders, and
advances to
Brussels.

After the departure of Cobourg from Tournay, the Allies strove in vain to make head against the superior forces of the Republicans in Maritime Flanders. Tournay was evacuated ; and while Pichegru himself marched upon Ghent to force back Clairfait, he detached Moreau with a considerable force to invest the places bordering on the ocean. Nieuport capitulated, Fort Ecluse, the key of the Scheldt, was blockaded, and the island of Cadsand overrun by the Republicans, who crossed the arm of the sea which separates it from the mainland by swimming. Clairfait, although at length reinforced by six thousand British, who had rapidly marched from Ostend, under Lord Moira, found himself unable to make head against Pichegru. The old German tactics of carrying on war by a series of positions, which only occasionally succeeded against the inconsiderable forces of Prussia, when guided by the genius of Frederic, totally failed when opposed to the vehement ardour and inexhaustible numbers of the Revolutionary armies. After in vain attempting, in conjunction with Cobourg, to cover Brussels, he was compelled to fall back behind the Dyle ; while the Duke of York also retired in the same direction, and encamped between Malines and Louvain. The retreat of the allied forces enabled the victorious armies of Pichegru and Jourdan to unite their forces at Brussels, where they met on the 10th July.²

July 10.
² Jom. v. 155, 162.
Th. vi. 406.
Toul. iv. 334, 335.

And thus, by a series of energetic movements and glorious contests, were two armies, which a short time before had left the extremities of the vast line extending from Philipville to Dunkirk, enabled to unite their victorious forces for the occupation of the capital of Flanders.

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The Austrian cabinet at that period entertained serious thoughts of peace. The opinion was very general on the Continent, that the fearful energy and bloody proscriptions of Robespierre had considerably calmed the effervescence of the Revolution, and that his stern and relentless hand was alone adequate to restrain its excesses, and restore anything like a regular government at Paris. These ideas received a strong confirmation from the speech which he delivered on occasion of the fête of the Supreme Being : it was known that he had moderated many of the energetic plans of foreign invasion projected by Carnot, and that his brother had used his influence to preserve Piedmont and the north of Italy from an incursion, at a time when the Allies were little in a condition to have resisted it. The Imperial government was really desirous of an accommodation, in order to concentrate their armies and attention upon Poland, which was hourly approaching the crisis of its fate ; and a large force had already entered Galicia, where they professed their intention of coming as deliverers, and were received with open arms by the people of that province. Unable to bear, any more than Prussia, the weight of a double contest on the Rhine and the Vistula, and deeming the latter more material to the interests of the monarchy than the former, they had definitively determined at Vienna on the abandonment of the Belgian provinces, and were now only desirous of extricating themselves from a contest in which, as it appeared to them, neither honour nor profit was to be gained. A secret understanding, in consequence, took place between Cobourg and the French generals, the conditions of which were, that the Austrians should not be disquieted in their retreat to the Rhine, and the Repub-

53.
Views of
the cabinet
of Vienna at
this period.

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licans permitted, without molestation, to reduce the four great fortresses which had been wrested from France in the preceding and present campaign. The fall of Robespierre prevented these overtures from coming to any further issue ; but they early attracted the attention of the vigilant minister who directed the affairs of Great Britain, and he urged his ambassador to make the strongest remonstrances against a step so prejudicial to the interests of Europe. But the Austrians were resolute in their determination to abandon Flanders, alleging as a reason the inconstancy and disaffection of its inhabitants. “ To behold a people so infatuated,” said Count METTERNICH, afterwards so celebrated as the great diplomatic leader, to Lord Cornwallis, “ as, notwithstanding the most pressing exhortations to take up arms in defence of their religion, their independence, and property, to refuse to move, and voluntarily place their necks under the yoke, singing *Ca Ira*, is a phenomenon reserved for these days of desolation.”¹

¹ Hard. iii.
7, 33.

54.

Diverging
retreat of
the British
and Austri-
an forces.
The British
retire to-
wards Hol-
land.

The British forces, now entirely detached from their Allies, were posted behind the canal of Malines, and they amounted to above thirty thousand British and Hanoverians, and fifteen thousand Dutch. Their object was, by remaining on the defensive, to cover Antwerp and Holland ; while the Austrians retired by Tirlemont upon Liege. In this way, while the Republicans remained with their centre at Brussels, and their wings extending from Wilworde to Namur, their adversaries retired by *diverging* lines towards the north and the south, and every successive day's march carried them farther from each other—a state of affairs of all others the most calamitous, in presence of an enterprising enemy, occupying a central position between them. The British were intent only on covering Antwerp and Holland ; the Imperialists on drawing nearer to their resources at Cologne and Coblenz.² Neither recollected that, by separating their forces, they gave the enemy the means of crushing either separately at pleasure, and that the secret conventions with the

²Jom.v.162,
170. Toul.
iv. 338.

Austrians exposed the British to the whole weight of attack. Their separation, too, left him in possession of a salient position, which would soon render both the provinces of the Lower Rhine and the United Provinces untenable.

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Contrary to the expectations of all who were not initiated into the mysteries of the diplomacy, and in opposition to what might have been expected from the previous energy of their measures, the Committee of Public Salvation arrested their army in the career of victory, and paralysed a hundred and fifty thousand men, in possession of an internal line of communication, at the moment when their enemies were disunited, and incapable of rendering each other any assistance. This was the result of the secret understanding with Prince Cobourg, which has just been mentioned. On the 15th July, the canal of Malines was forced, after an inconsiderable resistance by the Dutch troops, and the Duke of York retired to Antwerp, which was soon after evacuated, and his whole forces concentrated towards Breda, for the defence of Holland. On the other wing, Jourdan, more in appearance than reality, pursued his advantages against Cobourg; and, after several inconsiderable engagements with the rearguard, Liege and Tongres were evacuated, and the Austrians retired behind the Meuse. But, with these exceptions, nothing was attempted by the Republicans for several weeks, while the government waited the reduction of Valenciennes and the other places captured by the Allies on the frontier at the commencement of the war.¹

55.
Inactivity of
the French.

¹ Toul, iv.
338. Jom.
v. 162, 165,
170, 174.

To hasten their fall, a bloody decree was passed by the Convention, ordaining their commanders to give no quarter to any garrison which should not surrender within twenty-four hours after the first summons.² The humanity of the Republican generals made them refuse to carry this atrocious order into execution, and it was soon after rendered nugatory by the fall of Robespierre on the 27th July (9th Thermidor). The governor of Condé, when

56.
Decree of
the Conven-
tion to give
no quarter.
² Decree,
May 26.

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1794.

summoned to surrender in virtue of this disgraceful injunction to the French generals, replied, "That one nation had no right to decree the dishonour of another nation, and that he should prolong his defence so as to deserve the esteem of the French themselves." The Committee of Public Salvation, under Carnot's direction, feeling the iniquity of the measure, took advantage of fictitious delays to allow the garrisons to capitulate on the usual terms. General Scherer collected a body of troops from the interior and the neighbouring garrisons, and formed the siege successively of Landrecies, Quesnoy, Condé, and Valenciennes, all of which fell, after a trifling resistance, before the end of August. At the same time the decree already mentioned was passed by the Convention, prohibiting their armies from giving quarter to the British or Hanoverians who might fall into their hands. "Republican soldiers!" said Barère, in the report on which that decree was founded, "you must, when victory shall put into your power either English or Hanoverians, strike without mercy; not one of them ought to return to the traitorous territory of England, or to be brought into France. *Let the English slaves perish, but let Europe be free.*" To this decree the Duke of York replied by an order of the day, worthy of the nation whose forces he led, and the cause with which he was intrusted, ordering all French captives to be treated with the same humanity as before.^{1*} This generous conduct had the desired effect; the humane efforts of the British commanders were

¹ Moniteur,
29 Mai.
Hist. Parl.
30 Mai.
Ann. Reg.
145. His-
tory. Th.
vii. 74.
Toul. iv.
338. Jom.
v. 172.
Vide Ante,
c. xv. § 26.

* He stated in that noble document, "The National Convention has just passed a decree that their soldiers shall give no quarter to the British or Hanoverian troops. His Royal Highness anticipates the indignation and horror which has naturally arisen in the minds of the brave troops whom he addresses upon receiving this information. He desires, however, to remind them, that mercy to the vanquished is the brightest gem in the soldier's character, and exhorts them not to suffer their resentment to lead them to any precipitate act of cruelty on their part, which may sully the reputation they have acquired in the world. In all the wars which, from the earliest times, have existed between the English and French nations, they have been accustomed to consider each other in the light of generous as well as brave enemies; while the Hanoverians, the allies of the former, have shared for above a century in this mutual esteem. Humanity and kindness have at all times taken place, the

seconded by the corresponding feelings of the French officers, and the prisoners on both sides were treated with the same humanity as before the issuing of the bloody decree.

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While the fortune of war, after a desperate struggle, was thus decisively inclining to the Republican side on the northern, events of minor importance, but still upon the whole favourable to the French arms, occurred on the eastern and southern frontiers. The dubious conduct, or rather evident defection of Prussia, paralysed all the operations on the Rhine. Sixty thousand Prussians and Saxons were assembled round Mayence, and along the Nahe; and the departure of Jourdan with forty thousand, to reinforce the army on the Sambre, offered the fairest opportunity of resuming offensive operations with a preponderating force on the Moselle. Only two divisions, at a distance from each other, remained between Thionville and Kaiserslautern; and though the Republican government made the greatest exertions to reinforce them, the utmost that could be done was to raise the one to twenty and the other to ten thousand men. Nor was the superiority less decisive on the Upper Rhine, where fifty thousand Imperialists formed the cordon from Bâle to Mayence; and seventy thousand more were prepared for active operations; while the force in the field, under General Michaud, to oppose them, was only thirty-six thousand, supported by fifty thousand still retained in garrison by the cautious policy of the French government.¹

57.
Operations
on the
Rhine, and
disasters
consequent
on the se-
cession of
Prussia.

¹ St Cyr, ii.
232, 250.
Jom. v. 177,
184.

Yet, with this immense superiority of force, the Allies instant that opposition ceased, and the same cloak has been frequently seen covering those who were wounded, friends and enemies, while indiscriminately conveyed to the hospitals of the conquerors. The British and Hanoverian armies will not believe that the French nation, even under their present infatuation, can so far forget their character as soldiers, as to pay any attention to a decree as injurious to themselves as it is disgraceful to their government; and therefore his Royal Highness trusts that the soldiers of both nations will confine their sentiments of abhorrence to the National Convention alone, persuaded that they will be joined in them by every Frenchman who possesses one spark of honour, or one principle of a soldier."—*Proclamation, May 30 1794; Ann. Reg. 1794; State Papers*, p. 169.

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1794.

58.

Inactivity
of the Prus-
sians.
May 23.

in this quarter did nothing. Instead of assembling, as they might easily have done, eighty thousand men, to attack the centre of the French lines on the Rhine, and relieve the pressure which operated so severely on the Sambre, they contented themselves with detaching a small force to dislodge the Republican post at Morlautern. A slight advantage was gained at Kayserslautern over the Republican division intrusted with the defence of the gorges; and General Michaud, unable to make head against such superior forces, retired to the intrenchments of the Queich, while the army of the Moselle resumed the position it had occupied at the close of the preceding campaign. Shortly after, Michaud received powerful reinforcements, and made vigorous preparations for resuming the offensive; while the British ambassador vainly endeavoured to stimulate the King of Prussia to execute the part assigned him in the treaty of the Hague. The whole attention of Prussia was fixed on Poland, and the movements of General Kosciusko. So intent was the cabinet of Berlin on the partition of that country, that nothing could induce them to give any directions for the prosecution of the war on the Rhine, till after the fall of Charleroi, the battle of Fleurus, and the reinforcement of the Republican armies on the Rhine, had rendered it impossible to resume the offensive with any prospect of advantage.¹

¹ Jom. v.
177, 189.
St Cyr, ii.
232, 250.

59.
Operations
in Piedmont.
Mont Cenis
is carried by
the French.

In the south, the reduction of Lyons and Toulon, by rendering disposable the forces employed in the siege of these cities, gave an early and decisive superiority to the Republican arms. The levies ordered in September 1793 had brought such an accession of strength to their forces, that in the middle of April the army of the Alps amounted to seventy-five thousand combatants. Piedmont, menaced with invasion by this formidable force, had only at its command a body of forty thousand men, spread over a chain of posts along the summit of the Alps, from Savona to Mont Blanc, and an auxiliary

Austrian force, ten thousand strong, in the interior. The great superiority of the French forces would have enabled them to have instantly commenced the invasion of Italy; but, pressed in other quarters, the Committee of Public Salvation, under the directions of Robespierre, contented themselves with enjoining their commanders to drive the enemy over the Alps, and get possession of all the passes, deferring to a future year the long-wished-for irruption into the Italian provinces. The first operations of the Republicans were not successful. General Sarret, with a detachment of two thousand men, was repulsed at the Little St Bernard, while the column destined for the attack of the Mont Cenis was also unsuccessful. Far from being discouraged by these trifling reverses, General Dumas returned to the charge with more considerable forces, and on the 23d April, after a vigorous resistance, made himself master of the first pass, which was followed on the 14th May by the capture of the second. The loss of Mont Cenis cost the Sardinians six hundred prisoners and twenty pieces of cannon. By these successes, the whole ridge of the higher Alps, separating Piedmont from Savoy, fell into the possession of the Republican generals; and the keys of Italy were placed in the hands of the French government.¹

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1794.

March 24.

April 23.

May 14.

¹ Jom. v.
194, 199,
201. Bot.
i. 185, 193,
196.

Nor were the operations of the Republicans less successful on the frontiers of Nice. The counsels of the leaders were there directed by General Buonaparte, whose extraordinary military abilities had already given him an ascendancy far beyond his rank. His design was to turn Saorgio by its left, and cut off the retreat of its garrison, by the great road from over the Col de Tende. The attacking force was divided into three columns. The first, twenty thousand strong, commanded by Massena, broke up on the 1st April, with twenty pieces of cannon, to pass between Saorgio and the sea; the second, composed of ten thousand men, under the immediate directions of Dumorbion, remained in front of the enemy; while the third, of equal force, was destined to gain the upper extremity of the

60.
Great suc-
cesses of
Napoleon
and Massena
in the Mari-
time Alps.

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XVI.

1794.

valleys of the Vesubia, and communicate with the army of Savoy by Isola. In the course of his march, Massena traversed the neutral territory of Genoa, and, after a bold march as far as Carossio, found himself considerably in advance of the main body of the enemy, posted in intrenched camps on the western side of the mountains. Guided by the intrepid Colonel Rusca, an ardent hunter, well acquainted with these Alpine ridges, he boldly pursued his successes, and, by a skilful combination of all his force, succeeded in storming the redoubts of the Col Ardente. In vain the Piedmontese received the assailants with a shower of stones and balls; nothing could withstand the impetuosity of the Republicans; and Massena, pursuing his successes, reached Tanardo, and the heights which command the pass of the Briga. Rusca, familiar with the country, vehemently urged his commander to direct some battalions to descend to the convent of St Dalmazia, seize the great road, destroy the bridges, and cut off the retreat of the great body of the enemy posted at the camp at Rauss. But Massena had other objects in view. He had occupied, with considerable force, the cliffs which overhang in rear the fortress of Saorgio—an advantage which rendered that fortress no longer tenable. He preferred, in consequence, the certain advantage, now within his power, of rendering unavoidable, without risk, the evacuation of that important stronghold, which commands the pass by the Col de Tende from France into Italy, to the perilous attempt of compelling a force nearly equal to his own to surrender. Meanwhile the attack of the centre, under Dumorbion, had been attended with equal success; and the Sardinian forces, pressed in front and menaced in rear, evacuated the famous camp of Rauss, and fell back towards the Col de Tende. Dumorbion's leading columns approached the fort of Saorgio, at the same time that Massena's forces appeared on the heights immediately overhanging it behind; and this celebrated post, almost impregnable in front,¹ but destitute of any

April 28.

¹ Botta, i. 184, 190.

Jom. v. 204, 209, 210.

Th. vi. 283.

defence against the forces of the Republicans, now perched on the rocks in its rear, surrendered at the first summons.

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Meanwhile the French left successfully ascended the Vesubia, and, after a vehement resistance, the winding rocky road between Figaretto and Lantosca was stormed, and the Allies driven back to the Col de Fenestrelles, while General Serrurier cleared the valley of the Tinea, and established a communication by Isola with the army of Savoy. To reap the fruit of so many successes, Dumorbion ordered Garnier to seize the Col de Fenestrelles, while his own centre drove the enemy from the Col de Tende. Both operations were successful. The Col de Fenestrelles fell after hardly any resistance; and, although the Col de Tende was more bravely contested, the unexpected appearance of a division of French on their left spread a panic among the Piedmontese troops, which speedily led to the evacuation of the position. Thus the Republicans, before the end of May, were masters of all the passes through the Maritime Alps; and while, from the summit of Mont Cenis, they threatened a descent upon the valley of Susa and the capital, from the Col de Tende they could advance straight to the siege of the important fortress of Coni. Buonaparte, whose prophetic eye already anticipated the triumphs of 1796, in vain urged the government to unite the victorious armies in the valley of the Stura, and push on immediately with their combined strength to the conquest of Italy. The reverse at Kayserslautern induced them to withdraw ten thousand men from the army of the Alps to support the troops on the Rhine; and Dumorbion, satisfied with the laurels he had won, and with energies enfeebled by years, could not be induced to risk ulterior operations. After so brilliant a *début*, the Republican forces failed even in reducing the little fort of Exiles, on the eastern descent of Mont Cenis; and for the three summer months, the victorious troops reposed from their fatigues on the heights which they had won above the clouds.¹

1794.

61.

The Sardinians are driven over the ridge of the Alps.

¹ Bot. i. 186,
187. Jom.
v. 211, 214.
Th. vi. 282.

On the frontiers of Spain the war assumed still more

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XVI.

1794.

62.

War in the
Eastern
Pyrenees.
Great finan-
cial difficul-
ties of the
Spaniards.

decisive features. The reduction of Toulon enabled the central government to detach General Dugommier, with half the forces employed in its siege, to reinforce the army on the eastern Pyrenees; and it was resolved to act offensively at both extremities of that range of mountains. During the winter months, incessant exertions were made to recruit the armies, which the immense levies of the Republic enabled the southern departments to do to such a degree, that at the opening of the campaign, notwithstanding their late reverses, they were greatly superior in number to their opponents. On the other hand, the Spanish government, destitute of energy, and exhausted by the exertions they had already made, was unable to maintain their forces at the former complement. Before the end of the year 1793, they were reduced to the necessity of issuing above £12,000,000 sterling of paper money, secured on the produce of the tobacco-tax; but all their efforts to recruit their armies from the natives of the country having proved ineffectual, they were compelled to take the foreigners employed at the siege of Toulon into their service, and augment the number of their mercenary troops. Everything on the Republican side indicated the energy and resolution of a rising, everything on the Spanish, the decrepitude and vacillation of a declining state. Between such powers, victory could not long remain doubtful.¹

¹ Jom. v.
218, 221.
Toul. iv.
304. Th. vi.
278, 279.

63.

Successes of
Dugommier
there, and
total defeat
of the Span-
iards.

Dugommier, on his arrival at the end of December, found the army of the eastern Pyrenees raised by his junction to thirty-five thousand men, encamped under the cannon of Perpignan; but a large proportion of the troops were in hospital, and the remainder in a state of insubordination and dejection, which seemed to promise the most disastrous results. By entirely reorganising the regiments, appointing new officers in the staff, and communicating to all the vigour of his own character, he succeeded in a few months not only in restoring the efficiency of the army, but leading it to the most glorious successes. The Spanish army,

recently so triumphant, had proportionally declined ; above ten thousand men were in hospital, the expected reinforcements had not arrived, and the force in the field did not exceed twenty-five thousand effective troops. Before the end of February, the French force was augmented to sixty-five thousand men, of whom thirty-five thousand were in a condition immediately to commence operations. On the 27th March, the Republicans broke up and drew near to the Spanish position. A redoubt on the Spanish left was taken a few days after the campaign opened, and General Dagobert was carried off by the malignant fever which had already made such ravages in both armies. The Marquis Amarillas upon that drew back all his forces into the intrenched camp at Boulon. He was shortly after succeeded in the command by La Union, who immediately transferred the headquarters to Ceret, a good position for an attacking, but defective for a defending army. They were there assailed on the 30th April by the whole French force. One of the redoubts in the centre of the Spanish position having been stormed, the whole army fell back in confusion, which was increased to a total rout on the following day, by the Republican troops having made themselves masters of the road to Bellegarde, the principal line of their communication over the mountains into their own country. Finding themselves cut off from this route, the Spaniards were seized with one of those panics which afterwards became so common to their troops in the Peninsular war : the whole army fled in confusion over the hills, and could be rallied only under the cannon of Figueras, leaving one hundred and forty pieces of cannon, fifteen hundred prisoners, eight hundred mules, and all their baggage and ammunition, to the victors, whose loss did not amount to one thousand men.¹

April 30.

May 1.

¹ Toul. iv.
305, 307.
Jom. v. 222,
225. Th. vi.
278, 279.

Dugommier immediately took advantage of his successes to undertake the siege of the fortresses of which the Spaniards had possessed themselves on the French territory. Collioure and Bellegarde were besieged at the same time ;

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1794.

64.

Dugommier
follows up
his suc-
cesses.
Collioure
taken.

May 26.

¹ Toul. iv.

308. Journ.

v. 241, 243.

65.

Invasion of
Spain by the
Western
Pyrenees.

June 3.

and although the inconsiderate ardour of the Republicans exposed them to a severe check at Port Vendre, the siege of Fort St Elmo was pressed with so much vigour, that the garrison, abandoned to its own resources, was compelled to evacuate the place, and retire to Collioure. Marshal Navarro, the Spanish commander, at the head of a garrison of seven thousand men, made a gallant defence; and the rocky nature of the ground exposed the besiegers to almost insurmountable difficulties. But the perseverance of the French engineers having transported artillery to places deemed inaccessible, the commander, after having made a vain attempt to escape by sea, which the tempestuous state of the weather rendered impracticable, laid down his arms with his whole garrison.¹

At the other extremity of the Pyrenees, the French army, weakened by the detachment of considerable forces to Roussillon to repair the disasters of the preceding campaign, remained in the early part of the year on the defensive. The Republicans in that quarter did not amount to forty thousand men, of whom one-half were national guards, totally unfit to take the field. An attack by the Spaniards on the French intrenchments early in February having been repulsed, nothing was undertaken of importance in that quarter till the beginning of June, when the government, encouraged by the great advantages gained in Roussillon, resolved to invade the Peninsula at once at both extremities of the Pyrenees, while the improved organisation of the new levies around Bayonne afforded every prospect of success. The invasion on the west took place by the valley of Bastan, the destined theatre of more memorable achievements between the armies of Britain and France. The Republicans were divided into three columns, which successively forced the Col de Maya and the valley of Roncesvalles. Some weeks afterwards, an attempt was made by the Spanish commander to regain the position which he had lost; but he was repulsed with the loss of eight hundred men, and

soon after resigned the command of an army, the disorder and demoralisation of which were daily increasing. The Count Colomera, who succeeded to the command, was not more successful. He in vain endeavoured, by proclamations, to rouse the mountaineers of the Pyrenees to arms in their defence; the period had not arrived when the chord of religion was to vibrate through every Spanish heart, and rouse the nation to glorious efforts in the cause of their own and European freedom.¹

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XVI.1794.
June 23.¹ Toul. iv.
309, 310.
Jom. v. 248,
252, 255;
vi. 143.

Towards the end of July, the French drove the Spaniards out of the whole of the valley of Bastan, forced the heights of San Marcial, captured the intrenched camp and fortified posts on the Bidassoa, defended by two hundred pieces of cannon, and pushed on to Fontarabia, which surrendered on the first summons. Following up the career of success, they advanced to San Sebastian; and that important fortress, though garrisoned by seventeen hundred regular troops, capitulated without firing a shot. Colomera took post at Tolosa, to cover the roads leading to Pampeluna and Madrid; but at the first appearance of the enemy the whole infantry took to flight, and left the enemy's attack to be sustained by the cavalry alone, who, by a gallant charge, succeeded in arresting the advance of the pursuers. By these successes, the French were firmly posted in the Spanish territory, and their wants amply supplied from the great magazines and stores, both of ammunition and provisions, which fell into their hands in the fortified places on the frontier. The British historian, who recounts the facility with which these victories were achieved by the inexperienced troops of France, cannot help feeling a conscious pride at the recollection of the very different actions of which that country was afterwards the theatre, and at marking, in the scenes of Spanish disgrace, the destined theatre of British glory.²

66.
Great successes of the
Republicans
in this quarter.
July 24.

August 4.

² Jom. v.
152.

While these events were occurring in Biscay, successes still more decisive were gained on the eastern frontier. Twenty thousand of the Republicans were employed in

CHAP.
XVI.1794.
67.Siege and
capture of
Bellegarde.

Sept. 12.

the blockade of Bellegarde ; and the Catalonians, always ready to take up arms when their hearths were threatened, turned out in great numbers to reinforce the army of La Union. After three months of incessant efforts, the Spanish commander deemed his troops sufficiently reinstated to resume the offensive, and attempt the relief of Bellegarde, which was now reduced to the last extremity. The principal attack was made against the right wing of Dugommier, and, if it had been assailed with sufficient force, the success of the Spaniards could hardly have been doubtful. But the columns of attack having been imprudently divided, the convoy destined to revictual the fortress never reached its destination ; and General AUGEREAU,* afterwards Duke of Castiglione and Marshal of France, who commanded the right wing, though driven back to the camp of La Madeleine, succeeded in baffling the objects of the enemy. The consequence was, that the Spaniards, after having at first gained some advantages, were compelled to retreat, and Bellegarde, seeing no prospect of relief, capitulated a few days afterwards. The Spanish general excused himself for the bad success of his arms, by alleging the insubordination and misconduct of the troops. "Without," said he, in his report to government, "consideration, without obeying their chiefs or their officers, who did their utmost to retain them, the soldiers took to flight, after having for the most part thrown away their arms." A battalion was ordered to be decimated for its cowardice, and La Union, despairing of success, solicited his dismissal.¹

¹ Toul. v.
30, 33. *Jom.*
vi. 118, 123.
Th. vii. 92.

68.
Ineffectual
proposals
for peace by
the Span-
iards.

Discouraged by such repeated reverses, the Spanish government made proposals of peace ; but the terms were deemed so inadmissible by the Committee of Public Salvation, that they ordered Dugommier to give their answer from the cannon's mouth. In the meanwhile the Spanish commander had leisure to strengthen his position. Two hundred and fifty guns, in two lines, arranged along a

* See a biography of AUGEREAU, *infra*, chap. xx. § 51.

succession of heights, nearly seven leagues in extent, presented a front of the most formidable kind, while a smaller intrenched camp in the rear, around Figueras, afforded a secure asylum in case of disaster. But the result proved how rare it is that a position of that description, how strong soever in appearance, is capable of arresting an enterprising and able assailant. The artillery, perched upon eminences, produced but an inconsiderable effect, with its plunging shot, on the masses in the valleys beneath; while the distance and difficulty of communication between the different parts of the line rendered a disaster in any quarter extremely probable, from the superior forces which the enemy could bring to bear upon one point. Should such a catastrophe occur, it appeared hardly reparable.¹

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XVI.

1794.

¹ Toul. v. 34.
Jom. vi. 124,
125.

On the night of the 16th November, the French attacking army, thirty thousand strong, was put in motion. It was divided into three columns. The right, under the command of Augereau, after an arduous march of eighteen hours over rocks and precipices, drove the Spaniards, under General Courten, from the neighbourhood of the camp of La Madeleine, and made themselves masters of the whole intrenchments in that quarter; but the left, under General Lauret, was repulsed by the heavy fire from the batteries to which he was opposed; and when Dugommier was preparing to support him, he was killed by a shell from the central redoubts of the enemy. This unlooked-for disaster for a time paralysed the movements of the Republican army; till Pérignon, having been invested with the command, moved a considerable force to the relief of Lauret, and with some difficulty extricated him from his perilous situation. But Augereau had meanwhile vigorously followed up his successes. After giving his troops breath, he moved them to the centre, and forced the great redoubt, though bravely defended by twelve hundred men; the result of which was, that the Spaniards abandoned five other redoubts, and almost all their artillery, and fell back to their intrenched camp in the neighbourhood of Figueras.²

69.
Great defeat
of the Span-
iards near
Figueras.² Toul. v. 34.
Jom. vi. 140.
Th. vii. 200.

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XVI.

1794.

70.

Their in-
trenchments
carried, and
Figueras
and Rosas
taken.
Nov. 19.

Nov. 20.

Nov. 24.

Pérignon instantly prepared to follow up his successes. Wisely judging that the left was the weak point of the enemy's position, he reinforced Augereau in the night with two fresh brigades, and, on the morning of the 20th, moved all his forces to the attack. General Bon, intrusted with the conduct of the vanguard of the right wing, defiled over tracts hardly practicable for single passengers, and crossed the river Muga repeatedly, with the water up to the soldiers' waists. Arrived in the presence of the redoubts, he ascended the mount Escaulas, under a tremendous fire from the Spanish redoubts, and carried, at the point of the bayonet, the central intrenchment. La Union, hastening with the reserve to the fort of La Rosère, was killed on the spot; and that work, regarded as impregnable, having been stormed, its whole defenders were put to the sword. These disasters discouraged the Spaniards along the whole line. Several other redoubts having been carried by the bayonet, the defenders evacuated the remainder, and applied the torch to their mines. In a few minutes, twenty bastions, constructed with immense labour, were blown into the air; and the troops charged with their defence, flying in confusion to Figueras, overthrew a column of fresh troops advancing to their support, and rushed in confusion into the gates of the fortress. Such was the dismay of the Spaniards, that when the Republican outposts, a few days afterwards, approached Figueras, the garrison, consisting of above nine thousand men, amply provided with provisions and stores of every sort, laid down their arms; and one of the strongest places in Spain, amidst the general acclamation of the inhabitants, was delivered up to the invaders. This unexpected conquest having made the French masters of the rich and fertile plain of the Ampurdan, and of an ample supply of stores and artillery of every description, preparations were soon afterwards made for the siege of Rosas. The garrison consisted of nearly five thousand men, and the place, in itself strong, as the

glorious siege of 1809 demonstrated, was capable of being reinforced to any extent by sea. Nevertheless, such was the vigour of the Republicans, and the dejection of the Spaniards, that the assailants pushed the siege during the severest months of winter without any molestation. The fort of Trinity was reduced on the 7th January; and the garrison, threatened with an immediate assault by a practicable breach, retired by sea in the beginning of February, leaving the fortress to the enemy.¹

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XVI.

1794.

Feb. 3, 1795.
¹ Jom. vi.
133, 141.
Toul. v. 34,
36. Th. vii.
200.

Nor was the fortune of war more favourable to the Spanish forces at the other extremity of the line. After the fall of San Sebastian, Colomera endeavoured without effect to rouse the population of the Pyrenean valleys, and the Republicans attempted to erect Biscay into a Republic, to be independent of the Spanish crown. The usual fruits of democratic insurrection speedily appeared. The guillotine was erected at San Sebastian, and, in defiance of a solemn capitulation, the blood of the priests and the nobles was shed by the French commissioners, with as much inveteracy as if Guipuzcoa had been La Vendée. Meanwhile disease, the result of the misery they had produced, made deeper ravages than the Spanish sword in the ranks of the invaders; in a short time above thirty thousand men perished in the hospitals. At length, the Republican columns having been recruited by the never-failing levies in the interior, a general attack, late in autumn, was commenced on the Spanish positions. In the valley of Roncesvalles, their best division, after a vigorous resistance, was routed with the loss of forty pieces of cannon and fifteen hundred prisoners, and a severe tempest of wind and rain alone prevented its total destruction. This success enabled the invaders to seize and burn the foundries of Orbaizita and D'Enguy, which had so long served for the supply of the Spanish marine; after which they retired to the neighbourhood of San Sebastian and Fontarabia, still occupying in force the valley of Bastan.²

71.
Invasion of
Biscay, and
defeat of the
Spaniards.Oct. 16.
² Jom. vi.
154, 167.
Th. vii. 199,
200. Toul.
v. 218.

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

72.
They sue
for peace.

These repeated disasters, and the evident disaffection of a considerable portion of their subjects, who were infected by the rage for democratic institutions, at length disposed the Spanish government to an accommodation. Nor were the Committee of Public Salvation inclined to insist on rigorous conditions, as the liberation of two experienced and victorious armies promised to be of the utmost importance to the Republican forces, in the conquests which they meditated to the south of the Alps. With these dispositions on both sides, the work of negotiation was not difficult. Although the conclusion of the treaty was deferred to the succeeding year, yet it was understood on both sides that negotiations were in progress, and no operations of importance were undertaken after this period. The severe winter of 1794-5, which gave the Republican troops the mastery of Holland, likewise closed their operations on the snows of the Pyrenees.¹

¹ Jom. vi.
168. Toul.
v. 221.

73.
Renewal of
hostilities in
Flanders.

The approach of winter, however, afforded no respite to the armies on the northern frontier. After a delay of two months, occasioned by the secret negotiations which the fall of Robespierre had broken off, the Republican armies recommenced those active operations which their immense superiority of physical force speedily rendered decisive. The Army of the North had 70,000 effective men under its banners ; that of the Sambre and Meuse, nominally 145,000 strong, presented an efficient force of 116,000 men ; while the Duke of York, to cover the United Provinces, had hardly 50,000 ; and General Clairfait, who had replaced Prince Cobourg, could only muster 100,000 to maintain the footing of the Imperialists in the Flemish provinces. The French armies were so situated, that they could mutually communicate with and support each other : the Austrians and British were far asunder, incapable of rendering mutual aid, and alienated by long-continued common disaster. But, con-

sidered morally, the inequality between the contending armies was still greater. On the one side was the triumph of victory, the vigour of democratic ambition, the ardour of patriotic enthusiasm, the confidence of increasing numbers, conscious ability, and a novel system of warfare ; on the other, the dejection of defeat, the recrimination of commanders, the jealousies of nations, declining numbers, and an obstinate adherence to antiquated tactics.¹

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

¹ Jom. vi.
15, 26. Th.
vii. 76.

All anxiety about their rear having been removed by the reduction of Condé, Valenciennes, Quesnoy, and Landrecies, the Republicans in the end of August resumed the offensive. The fort of Ecleuse having surrendered to General Moreau, the Army of the North, reinforced by his division, commenced the invasion of Holland, while the States-General obstinately persisted in maintaining half their troops, amounting to twenty thousand men, in garrison in the interior, thirty leagues from the theatre of war, thereby leaving the protection of the frontier to the comparatively inconsiderable force of the British commander. With little more than half the invader's troops, the Duke of York was charged with the defence of a frontier twenty leagues in extent. He first took up a defensive position behind the Aa ; but his advanced posts having been defeated by the French with the loss of fifteen hundred prisoners, he was compelled to retire to the right bank of the Meuse, leaving the important places of Bergen-op-Zoom, Breda, and Bois-le-Duc, to their own resources.²

74.
British re-
tire to the
right bank
of the
Meuse.

Sept. 4.

Sept. 15.
² Jom. vi. 22,
25. Toul. v.
66, 67. Th.
vii. 77, 78.
Sept. 18.

Meanwhile the army of the Sambre and Meuse, under Jourdan, made preparations for a general attack on the scattered forces of Clairfait. On the 18th, the Republicans, divided into six columns, broke up, and a number of partial actions took place along the whole line ; but the post of Ayvaile having been forced by the French, the Austrians fell back with the loss of fifteen hundred men and thirty-six pieces of cannon ; and, after several ineffectual attempts to make a stand, finally evacuated

75.
Battle of
Ruremonde,
and retreat
of the Aus-
trians.
Sept. 18.

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

Oct. 2.

their positions on the Meuse, and retired towards Rolduc and Aix-la-Chapelle. Jourdan immediately followed them; and while Kléber, with fifteen thousand men, formed the blockade of Maestricht, the commander himself, with a hundred thousand, pressed the discomfited forces of Clairfait, now hardly in a condition to keep the field, from the confusion and precipitance of their retreat. In vain the Imperialists took up a strong defensive position behind the Roer. On the 2d of October, the Republican columns were in motion at break of day, to assail their position; and, for the first time since the Revolution, the splendid spectacle was exhibited of ninety thousand men moving to the attack with the precision and regularity of a field-day. The Germans occupied a series of heights behind the river, from whence their numerous artillery kept up a destructive plunging fire upon the advancing columns of the French; but nothing could arrest the enthusiasm of the Republicans. The French grenadiers, with Bernadotte at their head, plunged into the stream, and drove the Austrians from the opposite heights, while General Scherer, on the other wing, also forced the passage of the river, and made himself master of Düren. These disasters induced Clairfait, who still bravely maintained himself in the centre, to order a general retreat, which was effected before night-fall, with the loss of three thousand men, while that of the French did not amount to half the number.¹

¹ *Jom.* vi. 32, 36, 46.
Toul. v. 69.
Th. vii. 79, 84.

76.
Who cross
the Rhine,
and Maes-
tricht is
taken.
Oct. 5.

Oct. 10.

This battle a second time decided the fate of Flanders, and threw back the Imperial army beyond the Rhine. The Austrians in haste crossed that river at Muhlheim, and Jourdan entered Cologne the day following, and soon afterwards extended his troops to Bonn. Soon after the siege of Maestricht was seriously undertaken, and such was the activity of the Committee of Public Salvation, that a splendid siege-equipage, of two hundred pieces, descended the Meuse, and speedily spread desolation through the city. A large cavern, discovered in the

rock on which the fort of St Petre was situated, gave rise to a subterraneous warfare, in which the French soldiers, ever ready to adapt themselves to circumstances, speedily distinguished themselves, and acquired a superiority over their opponents. At length, on November 4, the garrison, despairing of being relieved, capitulated, upon condition of not serving against the French till regularly exchanged ; and this noble fortress, with three hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, fell into the hands of the Republicans. After this event, and the capture of the castle of Rheinfels by the army of the Moselle, which shortly after took place, there remained to the Imperialists nothing of all their vast possessions on the left bank of the Rhine, but Luxembourg and Mayence.¹

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

Nov. 4.

¹Jom.vi.42,
45. Toul.
v. 79. Th.
vii. 85.

Nor were the operations of the left wing, destined for the invasion of Holland, less successful. After the retreat of the Duke of York, Pichegru, whose forces amounted to seventy thousand efficient troops, formed the siege of Bois-le-Duc, the situation of which, being at the confluence of three streams, was of importance as a base to future operations. The States-General had neglected to provide for the defence of this important fortress ; and the Duke of York had not a man he could detach for its succour. Its garrison was too weak either to defend the works or undergo the fatigue of a siege ; the fort of Crevecœur surrendered almost at the first shot, and in a fortnight after the place capitulated, after a resistance disgraceful to the Dutch arms. After its capture, the British general distributed his troops along the line of the Waal, in hopes of being able to maintain a communication with the fortress of Grave, now threatened with a siege ; but Pichegru, continuing his career of success, crossed the Meuse, and attacked the advanced posts of the Allies with so much vigour that they were compelled to fall back, with considerable loss, across that river. Disconcerted by this check, the Duke of York stationed part of his troops in an intrenched camp, under the

77.

Active pursuit of the British by the Republicans, and retreat of the former behind the Waal.

Sept. 29.

Oct. 10.

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

¹ Toul. v.
68, 72, 77,
78. Jom.
vi. 47, 56.
Th. vii. 86.

cannon of Nimeguen, and the remainder in a line around Thiel, and between the Waal and the Leck, communicating with the Dutch corps at Gorcum, in the hope of being permitted to remain there undisturbed during the winter. Meanwhile Pichegru invested Grave and Venloo; the latter of which, though defended by a sufficient garrison of eighteen hundred men, and amply provided with artillery and ammunition, surrendered before the works were injured, from the mere annoyance of the enemy's musketry.¹

78.
Efforts of
the English
Opposition
to decry the
war, and
firmness of
Mr Pitt.

The successive intelligence of the defection of the Prussians, and the open abandonment of the Low Countries by the Austrian troops, which exposed Holland and Hanover to the immediate invasion of the Republican forces, afforded the Opposition in the British parliament a favourable opportunity for renewing their attacks on the government; and they triumphantly observed, that, after twenty-seven months of bloodshed and combats, the Allies were reduced to the same situation in which they were when Dumourier projected the invasion of Holland. But nothing could shake the firmness of Mr Pitt. "It matters little," said he, "whether the disasters which have arisen are to be ascribed to the weakness of the generals, the intrigues of camps, or the jealousies of the cabinets; the fact is, that they exist, and that we must anew commence the salvation of Europe." In pursuance of this heroic resolution, Sir Arthur Paget was despatched to Berlin, to endeavour to obtain some light on the ambiguous and suspicious conduct of Prussia; and Lord Spencer to Vienna, to endeavour to divert the Imperial cabinet from their alarming intention of abandoning the Low Countries. As soon as the latter nobleman arrived at Vienna, he obtained a private audience of the Emperor, and laid before him the proposals of the British government, which were no less than the offer of an annual subsidy of three millions sterling, provided the Imperialists would renew the war in Flanders, and give the command

of the army to the Archduke Charles, with Clairfait, Beaulieu, and Mack, for his council. At the same time they stated such facts respecting the measures of Cobourg, who was deeply imbued with the temporising policy the cabinet of Vienna had now adopted, as led to his recall from the army, of which Clairfait assumed the command.¹

The cabinet of Vienna, however, secretly inclining to peace, delayed giving any definite answer to the proposals of Mr Pitt, and meanwhile entertained covert overtures from the French government; while Clairfait received orders to remain altogether on the right bank of the Rhine, and Alvinzi was merely detached, with twenty-five thousand men, to co-operate with the Duke of York in the defence of Holland. This retreat renewed the alarm of Prussia for her possessions on the Rhine, which was much increased by the cessation, about the same period, of the subsidies from the British government, who most justly declined to continue their monthly payments to a power which was doing nothing in aid of the common cause. Frederick-William upon this withdrew twenty thousand of his best troops from the army of the Rhine, to join the forces which the Empress Catherine was moving towards Warsaw under the far-famed Suwarroff. It was now evident that the coalition was rapidly approaching its dissolution. The King of Prussia openly received overtures of peace from the French government, while the Duke of Würtemberg, the Elector of Saxony, the Elector of Mayence, and the other lesser potentates, secretly made advances to the same effect, and insisted so strongly on the danger of their situation, that the Emperor, notwithstanding all the firmness of Thugut, was obliged to acquiesce in their pacific measures. The 5th of December was the day fixed for the discussion of the important question of peace or war in the diet of the Germanic empire. And such was the consternation generally diffused by the divisions of the Allies, and the successes of the French, that fifty-seven voices then declared for peace, and thirty-six

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

1 Hard. iii.
41, 69, 73.
Parl. Hist.
xxx. 1036.

79.

But the
Austrian
and Prussian
cabinets
resolve on
peace, and
contract
their efforts.

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

Dec. 5.

¹ Hard. iii.
81, 95, 110.
Malmes. ii.
217, 314.

demanded the King of Prussia for a mediator. This important resolution at once determined the conduct of Prussia. She now threw off the mask, and established conferences at Bâle preparatory to a peace ; while Britain made unheard-of efforts to retain Austria in the confederacy, and at length, by the offer of a subsidy of £6,000,000, prevailed on that power to maintain her armies on the defensive on the banks of the Rhine, and resume, in the ensuing campaign, a vigorous offensive in Italy.¹

80.

Siege of
Nimeguen,
and winter
campaign in
Holland,
and misun-
derstanding
between the
Dutch and
British.
Oct. 27.

The successes which have been detailed, great as they were, turned out to be but the prelude, on the part of the French, to a winter campaign attended with still more decisive results. Towards the end of October, Pichegru undertook the siege of Nimeguen : the Duke of York approached with thirty thousand men, and by a vigorous sally upon the besiegers, who had the temerity to open their trenches, though the place was only invested on the left bank of the Waal, gained a brilliant but ephemeral success, attended by no important consequences. Shortly after, the French established some batteries, destined to command the bridge which connected the town with the intrenched camp in its rear, and soon sank some of the pontoons composing it. This so much disconcerted the allied commanders that they hastily evacuated the place, with the bulk of the troops under their orders, in the night, leaving its defence to an inadequate garrison of three thousand men. These soldiers, feeling themselves unable to man the works, discouraged by the flight of their fellow-soldiers, overawed by the redoubled fire of the besiegers, and despairing of maintaining the place, immediately attempted to follow their example. Terror seized their ranks ; they precipitated themselves upon the bridge, which was burned before the rearguard had passed over. One regiment was obliged to capitulate, and part of another, embarked on a flying bridge, was stranded on the left bank, and next day made prisoners by the French.

Nov. 4.

Thus this splendid fortress, which rendered them masters of the passage of the Waal, fell into the hands of the Republicans. The Dutch loudly reproached the British with the abandonment of this important point, but apparently without reason ; for how was it to be expected that the Duke of York, with thirty thousand men, was to maintain himself in presence of seventy thousand French, with the Rhine in his rear, when three times that force of Austrians had deemed themselves insecure till they had that river, a hundred miles further up, thrown between them and the enemy ? Be that as it may, the evacuation of Nimeguen completed the misunderstanding between the allied powers, and by spreading the belief in Holland that their cause was hopeless, and that their allies were about to abandon them, eminently contributed to the easy conquest of the United Provinces which so soon after followed. Grave was immediately besieged ; and Breda, one of the last of the Dutch barrier towns, invested.¹

CHAP.
XVI.
1794.

¹ Toul. v.
76, 77. Jom.
vi. 174, 177.
Th. vi. 176,
177.

The French army, worn out with seven months of incessant marching and bivouacs, now stood excessively in need of repose. The clothing of the soldiers was in rags, their shoes were worn out, and the equipments of the artillery, but for the supplies obtained in the captured places, would long ago have been exhausted. But all the representations of the generals upon these points were overruled. The Committee of Public Salvation, inflamed by the spirit of conquest, and guided by the enterprise of Carnot, resolved upon exacting from them fresh sacrifices. Accustomed to find every difficulty yield to the devotion of the Republican soldiers, or be overcome by the prodigious amount of the Republican levies, they resolved, after a month's rest to the troops, to prosecute their successes in the midst of a rigorous winter, and to render the severity of the season the means of overcoming the natural defences of the Dutch provinces. The first object was to cross the Waal, and, after driving the allied

81.
Extraordi-
nary fatigues
and increas-
ed efforts of
the French
army.

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

Nov. 12.
¹ Jom. vi.
179, 182.
Toul. v. 166.
Th. vii. 178,
181.

forces over all the mouths of the Rhine, penetrate into Holland by the Isle of Bommel. For this purpose, boats had for some time past been collected at Fort Crevecoeur, and pontoons and other materials for a bridge at Bois-le-Duc; and, the preparations having been completed, the passage was commenced at daybreak on the 12th November. But the firm countenance of the Allies defeated all their attempts; and, after several ineffectual efforts, Moreau, whose sagacity clearly perceived the danger of persisting in the design, withdrew his troops, and the army was put into winter-quarters, on the left bank of the Meuse and the Rhine.¹

82.
Pichegru
projects a
winter cam-
paign.

Early in December, the Duke of York, supposing the campaign finished, set out for England, leaving to General Walmoden the perilous task of protecting, with an inferior and defeated army, a divided country against a numerous and enterprising enemy. But a severe frost, which soon after set in, and rendered that winter long memorable in physical annals, made the Republicans conceive the design of invading Holland during the season when the extreme cold had rendered the numerous canals and rivers which intersected the country passable for troops and artillery. The prospect of that danger excited the utmost alarm in the mind of General Walmoden, who saw the Meuse frozen in his front, while the Rhine and the Waal, the waters of which are prevented from congealing by the tide which flows up them, were charged with floating ice in his rear, and thus were alike impassable for boats or land forces. In these circumstances he was justly afraid that the same severe weather which exposed his line to the attacks of the enemy in his front, would render the passage of the arms of the sea in his rear impracticable in the event of retreat.² Influenced by these apprehensions, he passed his heavy cavalry to the other side of the Waal, evacuated his magazines and hospitals upon Dewenter, and ordered the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt, cantoned with the most advanced corps in

² Jom. vi.
183, 184.
Toul. v. 167.
Th. vii. 182,
183.

the island of Bommel, to abandon it on the first intelligence of the passage of the Meuse by the enemy.

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

Situated around the mouths of the Rhine, HOLLAND exhibits the most striking contrast to the stupendous range of snowy mountains in which that noble river takes its rise. It is remarkable that the two most celebrated republics of Europe, and the only ones which have long survived the changes of time, are placed at the opposite extremities of the same stream ; and that freedom in the one has found the same shelter in the mountains from which it springs, as in the other, amidst the marshes in which it is lost before emptying itself into the sea. The Meuse and the Scheldt on the south, and the Vecht and Issel on the north, flow through a part of the surface of Holland ; but the principal rivers which traverse the Dutch territory—the New Issel, the Waal, as well as the Rhine, properly so called, and a multitude of lesser branches—are but mouths of that mighty stream. Like the Danube, the Nile, the Ganges, the Mississippi, and all other great rivers, the Rhine has, in the course of ages, brought down an immense mass of sand, gravel, and other alluvial matter, which, accumulating on the level shores near its entrance into the sea, have at length formed the plains of Holland, through which its now broken and lazy current with difficulty finds a passage, in many different branches, to the German Ocean.¹

83.
Description
of Holland.

¹ Personal
observation.
Malte Brun,
vii. 2, 4.

A territory formed in this manner, by the confluence at their entrance into the sea of many different streams, is of course exceedingly flat, and in many places broken both by large internal lakes, and by considerable external arms of the sea and mouths of rivers. So frequent, indeed, are these aqueous interruptions of the Dutch territory, that in many places it is composed rather of a cluster of islands, than a continuous tract of dry land ; and the inhabitants, from the constant necessity of traversing the water, in passing from one part of the country

84.
Its sea-
dykes, and
peculiar
conforma-
tion.

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

to another, and the large proportion of their subsistence and their wealth which they derive from its fisheries or its commerce, are almost entirely nautical in their habits. So general is the custom of looking to naval communication as the great means of intercourse, that, when lakes or firths are wanting, the industry of the people has supplied artificial means of obtaining it ; and a multitude of canals, cut in every direction, at once afford cheap and commodious channels for commerce, and furnish water for innumerable artificial cuts, by which the riches of irrigation are diffused over their extensive meadows. These broad expanses were originally sandy and sterile ; but the pasturage of centuries has covered them with a thick coating of mingled animal and vegetable remains ; and in no part of the world are more luxuriant crops of grass now obtained, or more skill evinced in the management of the dairy. The stormy waves of the German Ocean are only kept out from these low and grassy meads by dykes, constructed in former times at an incredible expense, and maintained in these by incessant vigilance and attention. There the barrier, raised by human hands,

“ Spreads its long arm amidst the watery roar,
Scoops out an empire, and usurps the shore ;
While the pent Ocean, rising o’er the pile,
Sees an amphibious world beneath him smile :
The slow canal, the yellow-blossom’d vale,
The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail,
The crowded mart, the cultivated plain,
A new creation rescued from his reign.”

The slightest relaxation in the care of these dykes is speedily followed with fatal effects. An accidental fissure in the protecting sea-front, a rat’s hole, or the displacing by a storm of a few feet of earth, if not immediately remedied, is sufficient to open an inlet to the external waters. Quickly they pour down to the lower level of the meadows ; the entrance is rapidly widened by the force of the torrent ; in a few hours a great breach is made in the rampart, the ocean rushes in in a torrent some hundred fathoms broad ;¹

¹ Personal
observation.
Malte Brun,
vii. 4, 5.

the whole level surface is ere long covered by the waves, the houses are submerged, and the tops of the trees and spires of the villages appear like scattered islets amidst the waste of waters.

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

Dreadful catastrophes in former times have shown the reality and awful character of these dangers. Four centuries ago, the sea of Haarlem, which covers a space five leagues long by two and a half broad, was formed by the sea breaking through the dykes which restrained it. On the night of the 19th November 1421, during a violent storm, the sea-dyke of North Brabant gave way; the ocean rushed in, and before morning seventy villages had been submerged, a hundred thousand persons drowned, and twelve square leagues of fertile land converted into a watery waste, in which the remains of steeples and buildings may still be discerned in calm weather beneath the waves. The Dollart Sea, situated between the province of Groningen, in North Holland, and the territory of Hanover, which is eight leagues long and three broad, was formed by an inroad of the sea in 1277, which swallowed up thirty-three villages; and the great Zuyder Zee itself, thirty leagues in length, and twenty in breadth, which covers a surface as extensive as Yorkshire, was formed in 1225 by an irruption of the German Ocean, which broke through the line of sand-hills and dykes, the direction of which may still be clearly traced on the map, by the long line of islands which mark the original frontier of North Holland.¹

85.
Dreadful
irruptions of
the sea in
former
times.

¹ Malte
Brun, vii.
4, 5.

“The floating vessel swam

Uplifted and secure, with beaked prow,
Rode tilting o'er the waves; all dwellings else
Flood overwhelm'd, and them with all their pomp
Deep under water roll'd: sea cover'd sea,
Sea without shore: and in their palaces,
Where luxury late reign'd, sea-monsters whelp'd
And stabled.” *

A country in this manner originally wrested, and still preserved by incessant efforts, from the waves, necessarily

* *Paradise Lost*, xi. 745.

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

86.

Character
and habits of
the people.

has had a peculiar character and specific manners impressed upon it by the all-powerful signet of nature. Strenuous efforts have won for man the land which he inhabits ; ceaseless vigilance alone preserves it : and these lasting causes have communicated to the inhabitants habits and customs peculiarly their own. Constant exertion, persevering industry, vigilant circumspection, have become habitual from necessity, and still form the great characteristics of the country.* Their national character perhaps approaches more nearly to that of England than of any other people in Europe ; but yet it is in some particulars widely different. It wants the fire and energy, the lofty spirit and great aspirations, which have been communicated to the British race by their Danish and Norman conquerors ; but it possesses the perseverance and industry, the honesty and good faith, the love of freedom and spirit of order, which, even more than their courage and capacity, are destined to give the Anglo-Saxon race the dominion of half the globe. The love of freedom has there existed, in general, in conjunction with its indispensable allies, order and religion. A methodical system pervades every branch of their social economy ; community of interest retains the sailors and workmen in willing obedience to their superiors. Order and frugality constitute the leading features of the higher class of their merchants. Religion is established in decent competence ; pauperism relieved with discriminating humanity.¹

¹Personal
observation.

87.

Influence
of this cha-
racter on
their na-
tional his-
tory.

Nor have these admirable qualities been without their reward, both in former and recent times. Holland for centuries has exhibited a spectacle of social felicity and general virtue which might well put richer and greater nations to the blush, for the superior natural advantages which they have misapplied, and the boundless physical

* “ Mores quos ante gerebant

Nunc quoque habent ; parcumque genus patiensque laborum,
Quæsitique tenax, et qui quæsitâ reservent.

Hinc ad bellum pares armis, animisque sequuntur.”

OVID, *Metam.*

resources they have neglected. During the terrible contest which terminated in the establishment of the religious freedom of the sixteenth century, the United Provinces stood forth pre-eminent. The indomitable spirit of the house of Orange defeated successively the tyranny of Spain and the ambition of France ; the sieges of Haarlem and Leyden, the repulse of Louis XIV. from the gates of Amsterdam, will remain to the end of the world enduring monuments of the almost supernatural constancy which the heroism of religious duty can inspire even in a pacific community. When England, deserting her natural post in the van of freedom, leagued with France to crush the religious liberties of Europe, that noble commonwealth strenuously, and often successfully, resisted. Its fleets burned the English ships in their harbours ; its admirals swept the Channel in their pride ; and the maritime struggle, the severest that England ever knew, was determined at length, less by the defeat of the followers of Van Tromp and De Ruyter, than by the voluntary return of British policy to the alliance which duty, equally with interest, prescribed with their sturdy antagonists on the waves. When the French Revolution broke out, and Holland, partly by external violence, partly through internal delusion, was subjugated by the all-conquering Republic, the moral tempest uprooted none of the bulwarks of order in that steady community. Jacobin cupidity in vain urged the insurgent multitude to deeds of spoliation ; the government was changed, but no acts of ferocity were committed. The nation suffered and endured during the despotism of Napoleon, but abstained alike from imitating its rapacity or its oppression. And when at length the colossus of imperial power was overthrown, ancient habits were resumed, ancient influences re-established, without one deed of revenge being committed, or one tear, save in joy, being shed.¹ The partisans, equally with the princes of the house of Orange, restored the former government, with the glorious

¹ Proclamation, Amsterdam, Nov. 15, 1814.

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

88.

Immense
commerce
of the
Dutch.

declaration “ ‘Orange Boven!’ old times are returning : what we have suffered is forgotten and forgiven.”

Achievements so wonderful, a history so glorious, could have been brought about, in a country enjoying so limited and sterile a territory, only by the energies of commercial enterprise, and the resources of maritime wealth. It is the merchants and sailors of Holland who have, in every age, constituted alike in peace and war the strength and sinews of the state. Their industry and perseverance have discovered mines of wealth in every quarter of the globe. On the coast of Scotland they opened a fishery which yielded them two millions sterling annually, two centuries before that source of wealth was touched on by the Scotch people ; in the West Indies their sagacity led to the discovery, and their industry to the cultivation, of the richest sugar colonies in existence ; in the East they have acquired, and still retain, in Java, the noblest island in the Indian Archipelago. For centuries they engrossed nearly the whole carrying trade of the world ; the vast colonial empire of Great Britain, and the disasters of the revolutionary war, alone wrested it in part from them during the late conflicts. The merchants of Amsterdam numbered all the sovereigns of Europe among their debtors. All the luxuries of the earth were wafted to their shores by the sails of their commerce ; and the commercial influence of a state so small as to be scarcely distinguishable in a general map of the globe, was felt from one end of the world to the other. They have no vines ; but they have more wine in their cellars than is to be found in the magazines of Bordeaux : they have no woods ; but there is more timber in their dockyards than in the forests at the source of the Rhine and the Moselle : they have few arable fields ; but they have more corn in their granaries than the inhabitants of Poland consume. There is more marble in their warehouses than ever was cut in the quarries of the Archipelago, more diamonds in their jewel-boxes than in the hands of the goldsmiths of Portugal or

Brazil, and a greater quantity of rosewood, mahogany, and precious timber, than in all the rest of Europe, though their territory produces only willows and linden-trees.

More marvellous still, in the midst of this opulence, produced by commerce, there is hardly a beggar to be seen, nor a house in which there is a brick out, or a pane broken.¹

The old United Provinces, now forming the kingdom of Holland, enjoyed a very limited territory ; they contained only 8326 square geographical miles, amounting to 2,814,000 hectares. This small and swampy territory is inhabited by 2,443,000 inhabitants, being in many places, particularly the province of Holland, properly so called, the most densely peopled country in Europe.* Such, however, has been the vigour and enterprise of the Dutch, that this inconsiderable territory and population have acquired colonies in Africa, America, and the Indian Archipelago, inhabited by 9,426,000 souls, and extending over a superficies of 234,000 square miles ; so that the kingdom of Holland now embraces, in all parts of the world, 12,000,000 of souls, and 244,000 square geographical miles of territory, or above two and a half times the whole area of Great Britain and Ireland, which contains 91,000. Its income, according to the budget of 1836, was 85,000,000 francs (£3,400,000), its expenditure is now 105,000,000 francs (£4,200,000), and its national debt, as fixed by the treaty of 1831, 559,000,000 francs (£22,000,000),—so disastrous has been the burden of the costly naval and military establishment which the iniquitous partition of the kingdom of the Netherlands, by the revolutionary ambition of Great Britain and France in 1830, has occasioned.* Yet,

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¹ St Pierre,
Etudes de
la Nature,
Et. xiii. vol.
ii. 103.

89.
Population
and extent
of Holland
and its
colonies.

* This is the superficies and population of the old United Provinces ; the modern kingdom of Holland has received, by the Treaty of Separation with Belgium in November 15, 1831, a considerable district of Limbourg and Luxembourg, inhabited by 331,000 souls ; making the total population of the kingdom of Holland, in Europe, at this time, 2,775,000 souls ; and its area in Europe, 3,252,000 hectares, or 9780 square geographical miles.—MALTE BRUN, vii. 46 ; and BALBI, 637.

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¹ Malte
Brun, vii.
41, 43.
Ann. Hist.
xvi. 664.
Balbi, 637.

in spite of this grievous load, such is the general confidence of all nations in the resources and good faith of the Dutch government, founded on centuries of probity and regularity of payment, that their funds are amongst the highest in Europe, and, although yielding hardly five per cent dividend, are sought after as a secure investment all over the world.¹

90.
Magnitude
and histori-
cal celebri-
ty of their
towns.

It is in the extraordinary industry and activity of the urban population of Holland that the secret of these prodigious resources, existing in a country enjoying such very limited natural advantages, is to be found. The great towns of Holland are numerous, industrious, and wealthy, beyond those on a similar extent of territory in any other country of continental Europe. Considerable as they are in point of numerical amount of inhabitants, they are yet more remarkable from the vast commercial intercourse of which they have long been the emporium, and the many eminent men in literature and philosophy who have flourished within their walls. The numerous editions, dear to the student, which have issued from their printing-presses, and the glorious deeds in arms of which their ramparts have been the theatre, have given them a celebrity beyond what the magnitude of their population could otherwise have produced.† The necessity of forti-

* The total debt of the kingdom of the Netherlands was 1,198,625,000 francs (£48,000,000); but of this immense sum 639,366,000 was, by the treaty of partition of 15th November 1831, fixed on Belgium, leaving 559,259,000 francs, or £22,400,000, to the charge of Holland.—See MALTE BRUN, vii. 43, and *Treaty, 15th November 1831*; MARTEN'S *Nouvelle Série*, ii. 398.

† The population of the principal towns in Holland is as follows:—

Inhabitants.				Inhabitants.			
Amsterdam,	.	.	220,000	Rotterdam,	.	.	66,000
The Hague,	.	.	49,000	Utrecht,	.	.	36,000
Zwol,	.	.	31,000	Leyden,	.	.	29,000
Haarlem,	.	.	21,000	Groningen,	.	.	24,000
Dordrecht,	.	.	17,500	Middleburg,	.	.	17,000
Leeuwarden,	.	.	17,000	Delft,	.	.	14,000
Bois-le-Duc,	.	.	13,000	Nimeguen,	.	.	13,000
Breda,	.	.	11,000	Hoorn,	.	.	10,000
Zaandam,	.	.	10,000	Deventer,	.	.	10,000
Bergen-op-Zoom,	.	.	6,000	Flushing,	.	.	5,000

—MALTE BRUN, vii. 39.

fications to protect their level and inconsiderable territory from the grasping ambition of France, has caused all their cities to be surrounded with walls, nearly the whole of which, at least on the frontier towards the Scheldt, have been celebrated in military annals for obstinate and heroic sieges. Like the cities of Greece in ancient, or of the Italian republics in modern times, they have become immortal alike in arts and in arms. Every step in Holland and Flanders is historical ; the shades of William and De Witt, of Marlborough, of Eugene, arise at every step ; glorious recollections recur to the mind with every name.

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1794.

Except in defending towns, when both the soldiers and citizens often evinced the most obstinate valour, the military force of the United Provinces, which seldom exceeded forty thousand regular forces, and which was generally only twenty-four, never acquired any great celebrity. It was the sea which was the theatre at once of their ambition, of their prowess, and of their glory. With the exception of the English, the Dutch sailors have always been the best in Europe ; and if victory in the end inclined, in the desperate war with the United Provinces, to the British flag, it was less from any superiority in the seamen, than from the greater physical resources which a larger territory and wider colonial dominions brought to the arms of this country. No period, even in the bright annals of the English navy, has yet equalled the extraordinary and patriotic efforts made by the Dutch when assailed by the combined fleets of Louis XIV. and Charles II. ; for England never had to withstand so overwhelming a superiority of force. Fleets of forty and fifty ships of the line were then repeatedly fitted out by the Republic, which combated, always with glory, often with success, the yet more numerous combined squadrons of France and England, led by the valiant Duke of York. When the war broke out in 1793, the United Provinces had still forty-nine ships of the line, and seventy frigates and

91.
Military and
naval forces
of Holland.

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

¹ James' Naval History, i. 50. Malte Brun, vii. 41, 43.

smaller vessels ; though a large proportion of the former bore only sixty-four and fifty-six guns. But such were the calamities in which they became involved from the Revolutionary war, that at this time, notwithstanding the acquisition of a third of the Scheldt fleet by the treaty of 1814, the King of Holland possesses only five ships of the line and nineteen frigates.¹

92.
Government and social institutions of the United Provinces.

The government and social institutions of Holland, under the old commonwealth, were very peculiar, and different from those of any other republic which ever existed. The people had all a share in the administration of public affairs ; but they had so, not as individuals, but in their separate incorporations, guildries, or trades ; and in these the distribution of power was so arranged that influence was nearly entirely centred in the burgo-masters and heads of the different bodies. But these heads of incorporations or magistrates of towns did not constitute a hereditary exclusive aristocracy, as in Venice or Genoa ; they were composed of persons who had risen by their wealth and frugality to eminence in their several crafts, or acquired the lead in them by their probity and good conduct. Thus, though the working-classes had scarcely any share in the actual appointment of government, yet no sullen line of demarcation debarred them from it. The career of industry was accessible to all ; but none could obtain influence except such as had acquired property. The institutions of Holland in this manner combined that opening of the path of public eminence to the whole people, which Napoleon described as the great want which led to the French Revolution,² with that arrangement of the citizens in their separate classes, and according to their realised estates, which the Romans accomplished by their centuries, and Mr Burke described as the true principle of a conservative democracy.* It is in these

² Burke's Appeal from Old to New Whigs, 228, 229.

* "There is no ground for holding a *multitude, told by head, to be the People*. Such a multitude can have no sort of title to alter the seat of power in any country ; in which it ever ought to be the obedient and not the ruling power.

institutions that the real cause of the stability and good faith of their government, and the tranquil, industrious character of their people, is to be found.

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1794.

The preceding account of this interesting commonwealth will not, by the reflecting mind, be deemed misplaced even in a work of general history. It is not merely by magnitude of territory, or numbers of inhabitants, that the importance of a country is to be measured. The wisdom of institutions, the heroism of actions, the patriotism of the people, constitute the only real passport to immortality. Judging by this standard, the United Provinces will take a place second only to France and Britain in European history. Amidst the multiplied scenes of carnage, the sickening deeds of iniquity which have ever characterised democratic ascendancy in the world, it is refreshing to find one instance in which a commonwealth has existed independent for centuries, unchanged alike in its character and its institutions ; in which order has co-existed with freedom, social happiness with national independence, heavy public burdens with unshaken national faith. It encourages the pleasing hope, that means may yet be found of reconciling the contending interests of society ; of elevating labour without destroying property, of affording protection without encouraging license, and opening industry without inducing equality.

93.
Importance
of the
preceding
record of
Holland.

But most of all, the British historian feels himself called upon to render such an act of justice to the United Provinces. Twice in English history—during periods which he would willingly blot from its annals—England, in violation alike of its plighted faith and its obvious interests, has united with France for the oppression of Holland :

94.
Injustice of
England to
Holland in
recent times.

What power may belong to the whole mass, in which mass the natural aristocracy, or what by convention is appointed to represent and strengthen it, acts in its proper place, with its proper weight, and without being subjected to violence, is a deeper question. In that case, and with that concurrence, no such rash or desperate changes as we have witnessed in France could ever be effected.”—*Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*—BURKE’S *Works*, vi. 328.

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1794.

once in the seventeenth century, when bought by French gold ; once in the nineteenth, when deluded by French democracy. The British historian cannot restore to the House of Orange the kingdom of the Netherlands, guaranteed to it by his government in the treaty of Vienna ; nor the citadel of Antwerp, reft from its dominions by the arms of his country. But he can, with sorrow, confess a breach of national honour equalling the partition of Poland in its injustice, and an error in policy exceeding Joseph's destruction of the barrier towns in its inexpedience. And if these lines should meet the eye of a citizen of that ancient and memorable republic, it may afford him some consolation to discover, that there are men in England who can characterise with equal severity injustice committed under their own flag, as beneath the banners of their enemies ; and see, in the impartial administration of Providence, the same justice dealt out to his own as to foreign usurpation. He must be blind indeed, who does not discern, in the fierce demand for the Repeal of the Union, which so soon after threatened dismemberment to the British empire, the natural consequence and just punishment of that iniquitous interference to support a Romish rebellion, and effect the partition of an ancient ally, which, bringing the arms of England, for the first time recorded in history, into a league with Roman Catholic fanaticism and French propagandism, has succeeded in converting the barrier of Europe against France, into the outwork of France against Europe, and restoring Antwerp, the fulcrum of Napoleon against Britain, to a revolutionary dynasty, and the sway of the tricolor flag.*

At the end of December, the Meuse being entirely frozen over, and the cold as low as 17° below zero of Reaumur,

* O'Connell, in his speeches in Ireland in 1842 and 1843, to forward the cause of the Repeal of the Union, frequently alluded to the separation of Belgium from Holland, as at once a proof of what a nation determined to recover its rights could do, and an example which should and might be followed in the British empire. It is not surprising that he did so, and that the refer-

corresponding to 6° below zero of Fahrenheit, the French army commenced its winter campaign by an attack on two columns of the Dutch advanced posts. The result was what might have been expected from an irruption into a cordon of troops by concentrated forces. The Dutch soldiers, after a slight resistance, fled in confusion, some to Utrecht, and others to Gorcum, leaving sixty pieces of cannon, and sixteen hundred prisoners, in the hands of the invaders. In the general confusion, the Republicans even made themselves masters of some forts on the Waal, and crossed that river; but the stream being not yet passable for heavy artillery, Pichegru withdrew, in the first instance, his troops to the left bank. But meanwhile the right of the Dutch position was assailed by the French, one brigade driven into Williamstadt, another made prisoners, and the investment of Breda completed. On the following day Grave capitulated, after an honourable resistance of two months, and a bombardment of three weeks, from famine; a noble example, the more worthy of admiration from its having occurred in the middle of the general consternation, and after numerous instances of shameful dereliction of duty on the part of the Dutch troops.¹

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

95.

Pichegru
makes a
general at-
tack on the
allied posi-
tion.
Dec. 28.

Dec. 29.

Jom. vi.

186, 188.

Toul. v. 170.

Th. vii. 186,

190.

So many disasters produced their usual effect in sowing dissension among the allied generals. Walmoden was desirous of concentrating his forces on the Waal between Nimeguen and St André, to make head against the French, who were preparing to cross that river; but the Prince of Orange insisted on the allied forces approaching Gorcum, in order to cover the direct road to Amsterdam, where the Republican agents had been long preparing a revolutionary movement, and an explosion was daily expected. Thus thwarted in the only

96.

Walmoden
retires to-
wards Han-
over.

ence produced the greatest effect on his audience; for it was an instance of a successful and forcible repeal of a union of two kingdoms, the one Protestant, the other Roman Catholic, brought about by the combined efforts of Romish fanaticism and revolutionary fervour,—the very passions by which Ireland has so long been desolated.

CHAP.
XVI.

1796.

rational mode of carrying on the campaign, and despairing of making head against the greatly superior forces of the enemy, Walmoden resolved to abandon the United Provinces to their fate, and, with a view to secure his retreat to Hanover, concentrated the British forces behind the Linge, and covered them on the left by the Austrian contingents. Orders were at the same time given to abandon the line of the Waal, as soon as the enemy should present themselves in force for the passage of that river. But an unexpected panic having occurred in the division intrusted with the park of artillery near Tiel, it became evident that this position, in the dejected state of the army, was not tenable ; and the troops, with the exception of a small vanguard, were withdrawn behind the Rhine.¹

¹ *Jom.* vi.
189, 191.
Th. vii. 191.

97.
Dutch sue
for peace in
vain, and
French cross
the Waal.

Despairing of their situation after the departure of the British army, the States-General made proposals of peace to the French government, offering, as an inducement, to recognise the Republic, and pay down two hundred millions of francs. The overtures were in the highest degree desirable, as the success of the invasion depended entirely on the continuance of the frost, and an accommodation with Holland would disengage fifty thousand men for operations on the Rhine ; but the Committee of Public Salvation, carried away by their extraordinary success, and desirous, at all hazards, of establishing a revolutionary government in Holland, haughtily rejected them, and ordered Pichegru instantly to invade that devoted country. The continuance of the frost, which had now set in with more severity than had been known for a hundred years, gave an unlooked-for success to this ambitious determination. On the 8th January the French army crossed the Waal, then almost completely frozen, at various points, which was facilitated by the capture of Tiel by General Moreau.² A successful battle alone could now save the Dutch republic ; but the dejected state of the army, suffering under the extremity of cold and hardship, with

Jan. 8, 1795.

² *Th.* vi. 191.
Toul. v. 171.
Jom. vi. 192,
196.

the thermometer at 17° below zero of Reaumur, rendered this a hopeless alternative. Walmoden, therefore, abandoned Holland altogether, and, retiring to the line of the Issel from Arnheim to Zutphen, left the United Provinces to their fate.

The situation of the Stadtholder was now in the highest degree embarrassing. Abandoned by the army of General Walmoden, unable with his single forces to make head against the torrent of the Republican forces, distracted by the divisions in all the great towns in his rear, and daily expecting a revolution at Amsterdam, the Prince of Orange resolved to abandon the republic altogether, and embark for England. With this view he presented himself before the States-General, and, after declaring that he had done his utmost to save the country, but without success, avowed his resolution of retiring from the command, and recommended to them to make a separate peace with the enemy. On the following day he embarked at Scheveningen, and the States immediately issued an order to their soldiers to cease all resistance to the invaders, and despatched ambassadors to the headquarters of Pichegru to propose terms of peace. Meanwhile the French generals, anxious to avoid the appearance of subjugating the Dutch, were pausing in their career of success, in expectation of revolutionary movements manifesting themselves in the principal towns. General Daendels wrote to the leaders of the insurrection :—"The representatives of France are desirous that the Dutch people should enfranchise themselves : they will not subdue them as conquerors ; they are only waiting till the inhabitants of Haarlem, Leyden, and Amsterdam, rise in a body, and unite themselves to their brethren who have taken the lead at Bois-le-Duc." The receipt of this offer raised to the utmost height the public effervescence at Amsterdam. The popular party of 1787 assembled in great numbers, and besieged the burgomasters in the town-hall ; the advanced guard of the French army was

CHAP.
XVI.
1795.

98.
The Stadtholder embarks for England, and a revolution breaks out at Amsterdam, which admits the French troops.

Jan. 18,
1795.

CHAP. already at the gates ; terror seized the bravest hearts ;
 XVI. the magistrates resigned their authority ; the democratic
 1795. leaders were installed in their stead : the tricolor flag
¹ Jom. vi. was hoisted on the Hôtel de Ville ; and the Republican
 199, 200. troops, amidst the shouts of the multitude, entered the
 Toul.v. 175. city.¹
 Th. vii. 191,
 192.

99. The conquest of this rich and powerful capital, which
 Fall of had defied the whole power of Louis XIV., and imposed
 Utrecht, such severe conditions on France at the treaties of
 Leyden, and Utrecht and Aix-la-Chapelle, was of immense importance
 Haarlem. to the French government. Utrecht, Leyden, Haarlem,
 and all the other towns of the Republic, underwent a
 similar revolution. Everywhere the lower classes of the
 people received the French soldiers as deliverers : the
 power of the Convention soon extended from the Pyrenees
 to the northern extremity of Friesland. The immense
 naval resources, the vast wealth which ages of indepen-
 dence had accumulated in the United Provinces, lay at
 the mercy of the Convention. This great revolution, to
 the honour of the democratic party be it recorded, was
 accomplished without bloodshed, or any of the savage
 cruelty which had stained the first efforts of a free spirit
 in France—a signal example of the influence of free
 institutions in softening the asperity of civil dissension,
 calculated to alleviate many of the gloomy anticipations
² Jom. vi. which the annals of the French Revolution might other-
 208, 212. wise produce.²
 Th. vii. 194.

100. These successes were soon followed by others, if pos-
 Dutch fleet sible still more marvellous. On the same day on which
 captured by General Daendels had entered Amsterdam, the left wing
 the French of the army, after passing the lake of Biesbosch on the ice,
 cavalry. made themselves masters of the great arsenal of Dordrecht,
 containing six hundred pieces of cannon, ten thousand
 muskets, and immense stores of ammunition. The same
 division immediately after passed through Rotterdam,
 and took possession of the Hague, where the States-
 General were assembled. To complete the wonders of

the campaign, a body of cavalry and flying artillery crossed the Zuyder Zee on the ice, and summoned the fleet, lying frozen up at the Texel. The commanders, confounded at the hardihood of the enterprise, surrendered their ships to this novel species of assailants. At the same time the province of Zealand capitulated to the French troops; and the right wing of the army, continuing its successes, compelled the British to abandon the line of the Issel; Friesland and Groningen were successively evacuated, and the whole United Provinces overrun by the Republican arms. The British government, finding the services of the Hanoverians useless on the Continent, dismissed them to their native country, and the British, embarked on board their ships, speedily carried the terror of their arms to the remotest colonies of the Indian seas.¹

CHAP.
XVI.

1795.

¹ Jom. vi.
208, 212.
Th. vii. 194,
195.

The discipline of the French soldiers, during this campaign, contributed as much as their valour to these astonishing successes. Peaceable citizens converted into soldiers by the decree of September 1793, were rapidly inured to the restraints and the subordination of discipline: after eight months of marches and combats, they undertook, without murmuring, a winter campaign; destitute of almost everything, from the extreme depression of the paper money,* in which they received their pay, they crossed numerous streams amid the severest weather, and penetrated, after a month's bivouacking, to Amsterdam, without having committed the slightest disorder. The inhabitants of that wealthy capital, justly apprehensive of pillage from the entrance of so necessitous a body, were astonished to see ten regiments of soldiers, half naked, defile through the streets to the sound of military music, pile their arms in the midst of ice and

101.
Extraor-
dinary dis-
cipline of
the French
soldiers, and
spoliation of
their com-
manders.

* The soldiers being still paid in assignats, the pay of an officer, from their depreciation, was only equal in real value to three francs, or half-a-crown, a-month. In 1795, one-third was paid in specie, which raised the income of a captain to seventy francs, or three pounds sterling, a-month. — JOMINI, vi. 214.

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XVI.

1794.

snow, and calmly wait, as in their own metropolis, the quarters and barracks assigned for their lodging. It was such conduct as this which spread so widely the general illusion in favour of republican institutions. But the Dutch were not long in being awakened to sad realities from their deceitful dream. Forty of their ships of war had been withdrawn with the Prince of Orange, and were lodged in the British ports; the remaining fifty were immediately taken possession of by the Republicans for the service of the French. The credit of the famous Bank of Amsterdam was violently shaken, and owed its withstanding the shock to the intervention of government; commerce was entirely destroyed by the British blockade; forced requisitions, to an immense amount, of clothing, stores, and provisions, gave the people a foretaste of the sweets of military dominion; while a compulsory regulation, which compelled the shopkeepers to accept of the depreciated French assignats at the rate of nine sous for a franc, restored the army to abundance, by throwing the loss arising from the depreciation, to their infinite horror, upon the inhabitants of the enfranchised capital.¹

¹ Th. vii.
193, 199.
Jom. vi.
212, 216.

To complete the picture of this memorable campaign, it is only necessary to recount the concluding operations on the Upper Rhine and the Alps.

102.
Concluding
operations
on the
Rhine.

The check at Kayserslautern having induced the French government to reinforce their troops on the German frontier, ten thousand men were withdrawn from Savoy, and fifteen thousand from La Vendée, to augment the armies on the Rhine. By the middle of June the armies on that river amounted to 114,000 men, of whom fifty thousand were on the lower part of the stream, forty thousand on the upper, and twenty-four thousand in the Vosges mountains. The Committee of Public Salvation incessantly impressed upon General Michaud, who commanded them, the necessity of taking the initiative, by renewing his attacks without intermission, and of acting

in large masses ; but that general, not sufficiently aware of the new species of warfare which the Republicans had commenced, adhered to the old system of a parallel attack along the whole line. This action took place on the 2d July, and led to no decisive result. The enemy were touched at all points, but vigorously pushed at none ; and one thousand men were lost to the Republicans without any advantage. Upon receiving intelligence of this check, Carnot renewed his orders to Michaud to concentrate his forces, and act by columns on particular points. A fortnight after, the attack was renewed, and, by a concentrated effort against the centre of the allied position, their whole army was compelled to retire. The Republicans advanced in pursuit as far as Frankenthal, and resumed the line of the Rehbach, abandoned at the commencement of the campaign. In this affair the Allies lost three thousand men, and the spirit of victory was transferred to the other side.¹

CHAP.
XVI.
1794.

July 2.

¹ Jom. vi. 59.
75, 77. Th.
vii. 88, 89.

Both parties remained in a state of inactivity after this contest, until the beginning of August, when the army of the Moselle, being reinforced by fifteen thousand choice troops from La Vendée, and raised to forty thousand men, made a forward movement, and occupied Treves. But while this was going forward, the Prussian army, instructed by their recent disaster, and observing the dispersed position of the French army in the valley of the Rhine, made a sudden attack with twenty-five thousand men upon the division of General Meynier, at Kayerslautern, totally defeated them, and drove them back with the loss of four thousand men. Had this success been vigorously supported, it might have led to the most important results, and totally changed the fate of the campaign ; but not being followed up by the bulk of the allied force, which still preserved its extended position, it produced only a temporary consternation in the French armies. In effect, such was the inactivity of the allied generals, and their obstinate adherence to the

103.
The army of
the Moselle
occupies
Treves, and
the Allies
are driven
across the
Rhine.
Aug. 9.

Aug. 19.

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

Oct. 17.

¹ *Jom. vi.*
78, 86, 91.
Th. vii. 89.

104.
Conclusion
of the cam-
paign in
Savoy.

system of positions, that they allowed the army of the Moselle, not forty thousand strong, to remain undisturbed in Treves for two months, though flanked on one side by sixty-five thousand Prussians and Austrians, who occupied the Palatinate; and, on the other, by eighty thousand Imperialists, who were encamped in the neighbourhood of Luxembourg. At length, in the beginning of October, the Committee of Public Salvation directed the armies of the Moselle and the Rhine to unite and expel the Allies from the Palatinate. This junction having been effected, and the retreat of Clairfait beyond the Rhine having exposed their right flank to be turned, the Prussians fell back to Mayence, and crossed to the right bank by its bridge of boats. That important fortress was soon after invested; Rheinfels, contrary to the most express orders, was evacuated; and the old Marshal Bender shut up in the great fortress of Luxembourg, with ten thousand men. The rigours of the season, and the contagious diseases incident to the great accumulation of young soldiers, soon filled the hospitals; and the Republican armies were more severely weakened by the mortality of their winter rest, than they would have been by the losses of the most harassing summer campaign.¹

In Savoy, the great detachments made in June to reinforce the army of the Rhine, reduced the French armies to the defensive; and they confined their efforts to maintaining their position till the falling of the snows on the summits of the Alps, from the neighbourhood of Gex to the valley of the Stura. The plan of Buonaparte for the invasion of Piedmont by the valley of the Stura, was not adopted by the Committee of Public Salvation, and the breathing-time, thus afforded them, enabled the court of Turin to recover from their consternation. Not disconcerted by this, Buonaparte presented a second plan to the government, the object of which was to move forward the army of Italy to Demonte, and, after reducing that place,

he proposed to advance to the valley of Coni, while sixteen thousand men, from the army of the Alps, covered their operations. The result of this would have been, that fifty thousand men would have taken up their winter-quarters on the southern side of the Alps. The fall of Robespierre prevented the execution of this plan, and postponed for two years the glories of the Italian campaign. Confined by the orders of the new government to defensive measures, the army of the Alps yet gained a brilliant advantage, by defeating a corps of ten thousand Austrians and Piedmontese, who had advanced, in concert with the British fleet, against Savona, in order to cut off the communication between the Republicans and the state of Genoa, from which their principal resources were derived. After this success both parties retired into their winter-quarters, and the snows of that rigorous season there, as elsewhere, gave repose to the contending armies.¹

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1794.

¹Th. vii. 90,
91. Jom. vi.
97, 110, 114.

The contest in the west of France, which a little humanity on the part of the government would have completely terminated after the victories of Savenay and Mans, was rekindled during this year by the atrocious severities exercised towards the vanquished. The state of La Vendée at this period is thus painted by an eye-witness attached to the Republican armies :—"I did not see a single male being at the towns of Saint Amand, Chantonnay, or Herbiers. A few women alone had escaped the Republican sword. Country-seats, once so numerous in that country, farm-houses, cottages,—in fine, habitations of every sort had been reduced to ashes. The herds and flocks were wandering in terror around their usual places of shelter, now smoking in ruins, and lowing in vain for the hands which were wont to feed them. At night, the flickering and dismal blaze of conflagration afforded light over the whole country. The bleating of the disturbed flocks, and the bellowings of the terrified cattle, were drowned in the hoarse notes of the ravens,

105.
Renewal of
the war in
La Vendée.

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

and the howling of the wolves and other wild animals who had been attracted from afar to the scene of slaughter. As I journeyed in the night, guided by the uncertain light of the flames, a distant column of fire, widening and increasing as I approached, served as a beacon. It was the town of Mortagne in flames. When I arrived there, no living creatures were to be seen except a few wretched women, who were striving to save some remnants of their

¹ Mém. d'un
Ancien Ad-
ministrateur
des Armées
Républi-
caines, p.
97.

property during the general conflagration.”¹ These appalling cruelties were universal, and produced the usual effect of such excessive and uncalled-for severity. The infernal columns of Thurreau, the Noyades of Carrier, drove the Vendéans to desperation. “Nulla spes victis si non desperare salutem,”* became the principle of a new war, if possible more murderous and disastrous than the former. But it was conducted on a different principle. Broken and dispersed by the Republican forces, pierced in every direction by the infernal columns, the Vendéans were unable to collect any considerable body of forces; but from amidst their woods and fastnesses they maintained in detached parties an undaunted resistance. Stofflet and Charette continued, after the death of the other chiefs, to direct their efforts, though their mutual jealousy prevented any operations of considerable importance, and led them to sacrifice to their ambition the gallant M. de Marigny, one of the most intrepid and constant of the Royalist leaders.²

² Jom. v.
278. Lac.
xii. 295.

106.
Storming of
Thurreau's
intrenched
camps.

In the spring of 1794, General Thurreau established sixteen intrenched camps round the insurgent district; but the detachment of twenty-five thousand men from La Vendée to the Pyrenees and the Moselle having compelled him to remain on the defensive, the Royalists took advantage of the respite thus afforded to reorganise their forces. Forty thousand men, including two thousand horse, were soon under arms in this unconquerable district, with which Charette stormed three of the intrenched

* “No hope to the vanquished, but in the efforts of despair.”—SALLUST.

camps, and put their garrisons to the sword. Meanwhile the severities of the Republicans, in persecuting the peasants of Brittany who sheltered the fugitive Vendéans, kindled a new and terrible warfare in that extensive province, which, under the name of the Chouan War, long consumed the vitals, and paralysed the forces, of the Republic. The nobles of that district, Puisaye, Bourmont, Georges Cadouhal, and others, commenced a guerilla struggle with murderous effect, and soon, on a space of twelve hundred square leagues, thirty thousand men were in arms in detached parties of two or three thousand each.¹

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

¹ Jom. vi.
243, 246,
248. Lac.
xii. 297.

Brittany, intersected by woody ridges, abounding with hardy smugglers, ardently devoted to the Royalist cause, and containing a population of 2,500,000 souls, afforded far greater resources for the Royalist cause than the desolated La Vendée, which never could boast of a third of that number of inhabitants. Puisaye was the soul of the insurrection. Proscribed by the Convention, with a price set upon his head, wandering from chateau to chateau, from cottage to cottage, he became acquainted with the spirit of the Bretons, and their inextinguishable hatred of the Convention. Perceiving the elements of resistance thus rife, he conceived the bold design of hoisting the royal standard again amidst its secluded fastnesses. His indefatigable activity, energetic character, and commanding eloquence, eminently qualified this intrepid chief to become the leader of a party, and soon brought all the other Breton nobles to range themselves under his standard. Early in 1794 he opened a communication with the British government, and strongly urged the immediate landing of an expedition of ten thousand men, with arms and ammunition, with which he answered for the re-establishment of the Royalist cause. So formidable did this war soon become, that, according to an official report of Carnot, before the end of the year, there were no less than a hundred and twenty thousand

107.
Chouan in-
surrection
in Brittany,
and charac-
ter of
Puisaye.

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

Republicans on the shores of the ocean, of whom above eighty thousand were in active warfare. Even in Normandy, the seeds of revolt were beginning to manifest themselves ; and detached parties of Royalists showed themselves between the Loire and the Seine, and struck terror into Paris itself. "On considering this state of affairs," says Jomini, "it is evident that there existed over all the west of France powerful elements of resistance, and that, if they had been united under one head, and seconded by the allied powers, it was by no means impossible to have restored the Royalist cause." Had the Duke d'Enghien, with a few thousand men, landed in Brittany, and established a council, directing alike Puisaye, Bernier, Stofflet, Sapinaud, Scapeaux, and others, so as to combine their energies for one common object, instead of acting, as they did, without any concert in detached quarters, it is impossible to calculate what the result might have been. It is painful to think what at that crisis might have been effected, had fifteen thousand troops from Britain formed the nucleus of an army, made the Royalists masters of some of the fortified seaport towns with which the coast abounded, and lent to the insurgents the aid of her fleet and the terrors of her name.¹

¹ Puisaye, *Mém.* iv. 117, 141. *Jom.* vi. 234, 252.

108.
Immense
results of
the cam-
paign.

Such was the memorable campaign of 1794 ; one of the most glorious in the annals of France ; not the least memorable in the history of the world. Beginning on every side under disastrous or critical circumstances, it terminated with universal glory to the Republic. The Allies, at its commencement, were besieging, and soon captured, the last of the Flemish frontier towns ; the Republican forces on the Rhine were unable to make head against their adversaries ; the Alps were still in the possession of the Sardinian troops, and severe disasters had checkered the campaign at both extremities of the Pyrenees. At its conclusion, the Spaniards, defeated both in Biscay and Catalonia, were suing for peace ; the

Piedmontese, driven over the summit of the Alps, were trembling for their Italian possessions ; the allied forces had everywhere recrossed the Rhine ; Flanders was subdued, La Vendée all but vanquished, Holland revolutionised, and the British auxiliaries had fled for refuge into the states of Hanover. From a state of depression greater than in the darkest era of Louis XIV., France had passed at once to triumphs greater than had graced the proudest period of his reign.

But these immense successes had not been gained without proportionate losses, and it was already evident that the enormous sacrifices by which they had been achieved, could not be continued for any length of time without inducing national ruin. During the course of the campaign the Republic had strained every nerve. Seventeen hundred thousand men had at one time been enrolled by sea and land under its banners ; and at its close, a million were still numbered in the rolls of the army. But of this great force only six hundred thousand were actually under arms ; the remainder encumbered the hospitals, or were scattered in a sickly or dying state in the villages on the line of the army's march. The disorder in the commissariat, and departments intrusted with the clothing and equipment of the troops, had risen to the highest pitch : hardly any exertions could have provided for the wants of such a multitude of armed men, and the cupidity or selfishness of the Revolutionary agents had diverted great part of the funds destined for these objects to the augmentation of their private fortunes. It increases our admiration for the soldiers of the Republic, when we recollect that their triumphs were generally achieved without magazines, tents, or equipments of any kind ; that the armies, destitute of everything, bivouacked in the most rigorous season equally with the mildest, and that the innumerable multitudes who issued from its frontiers almost always provided for their daily wants from the country through which they passed.¹

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

109.
The prodigious forces
of the Republic.

¹ Jom. vi.
214, 215.
Toul. v. 194.

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

110.

Immense
issues of
assignats to
uphold these
great ex-
penses.

Nothing could have enabled the French government to make head against such expenses, but the system of assignats, which in effect, for the time, gave them the disposal of all the wealth of France.* The funds on which this enormous paper circulation was based, embracing all the confiscated property in the kingdom, in lands, houses, and movables, were estimated at fifteen milliards of francs, or above £600,000,000 sterling; but in the distracted state of the country, few purchasers could be found for such immense national domains, and therefore the security, for all practical purposes, was merely nominal. The consequence was, that the assignat fell to one-twelfth of its real value; in other words, an assignat for twenty-four francs was worth only two francs; that is, a note for a pound was worth only 1s. 8d. As all the payments, both to and by government, were made in this depreciated currency, and as it constituted the chief, and in many places the sole circulation of the country, the losses to creditors or receivers of money of every description became enormous; and, in fact, the public expenses were defrayed out of the chasm made in private fortunes. It was evident that such a state of things could not continue permanently; and accordingly the national exhaustion appeared in the campaign of 1795, and the Republic would have sunk under the failure of its financial resources in a few years, had not the genius of Napoleon discovered a new mode of maintaining the armies, and, by making war maintain war, converted a suffering defensive into an irresistible aggressive power.¹

At the commencement of the campaign, the Allies were an overmatch for the French at every point, and the

¹ Th. vii.
239.

* The monthly expenses of the war had risen to 200,000,000 francs, or £8,000,000, while the income was only 60,000,000, or £2,400,000; an enormous deficit, amounting to £67,200,000 in the year, which was supplied only by the incessant issue of paper money, bearing, by law, a forced circulation. There were 7,500,000,000 of francs, or £300,000,000 in circulation; the sum in the treasury was still 500,000,000 or £20,000,000; so that the amount issued by government was eight milliards, or £320,000,000 sterling.—TOUL. v. 194
Th. vii. 239.

superiority of their discipline was more especially evident in the movements and attacks of large masses. That their enterprises were not conducted with skill; that they suffered under the jealousies and divisions of the cabinets which directed their movements; and that, by adhering to the ruinous system of extending their forces, and a war of positions, they threw away all the advantages which might have arisen from the number and experience of their forces, must appear evident to the most careless observer. The fate of the campaign in Flanders was decided by the detachment of Jourdan, with forty thousand men from the Meuse, to reinforce the army of the Sambre; what, then, might have been expected, if Cobourg had early concentrated his forces for a vigorous attack in Flanders, or the immense masses which lay inactive on the Rhine been brought to bear on the general fortune of the campaign?¹

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

111.

Progressive
increase of
the French
forces dur-
ing the cam-
paign.¹ Jom. vi.
330, 338.

But it may be doubted whether, by any exertions, the allied cause could have been finally made triumphant in France at this period. The time for energetic measures was past; the revolutionary fever was burning with full fury, and fifteen hundred thousand men were in arms to defend the Republic. By bringing up column after column to the attack; by throwing away with merciless prodigality the lives of the conscripts; by sparing neither blood nor treasure to accomplish their objects; by drawing without scruple upon the wealth of one-half of France by confiscation, and of the other by assignats, the Committee of Public Salvation had produced a force which was for the time unconquerable. By a more energetic and combined system of warfare, the Allies might have broken through the frontier on more than one point, and wrested from the Republic her frontier fortresses; but they would probably have found, in the heart of the country, a resistance which would in the end have proved their ruin. What might have been easily done by vigorous measures in 1792 or 1793, could not have been

112.
The period
of success
for the
Allies was
past.

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

accomplished by any exertions in 1794, after the great levies of the Convention had come into the field, and the energy of revolution was turned into military confidence by the successes which had concluded the preceding campaign.

113.
General
reflections
on the cam-
paign.

It deserves notice, too, what signal benefit accrued to France in this campaign from its central position, and the formidable barrier of fortified towns with which it was surrounded. By possessing an interior, while the Allies were compelled to act on an exterior line, the French government was enabled to succour the weak parts of their frontier, and could bring their troops to bear in overwhelming masses on one point; while their opponents, moving round a larger circumference, charged with the protection of different kingdoms, and regulated by distant and often discordant cabinets, were unable to make corresponding movements to resist them. Thus, the transference of the troops which conquered at Toulon to the Eastern Pyrenees; of the divisions of the army of Savoy to the Rhine; of Jourdan's corps to the Sambre; and of the garrison of Mayence to Nantes,—the immediate causes of the successes in Catalonia, the Palatinate, Flanders, and La Vendée—successively took place, without any corresponding movement having been made in the troops opposed to them, to reinforce the threatened quarters. Each division of the allied forces, delighted at being relieved from the pressure under which it had previously suffered, relapsed into a state of inactivity, without ever recollecting that, with an active and enterprising enemy, a serious defeat at one point was a disaster at all.

114.
Great mili-
tary effect of
the French
fortresses.

The Archduke Charles has said, that the great superiority of France, in a military point of view, arises from the chain of fortresses with which it is surrounded, whereby it is enabled, with equal facility, to throw delays in the way of an invasion of its own, and to find a solid base for an irruption into its neighbours' terri-

tories ; and that the want of such a barrier on the right bank of the Rhine is the principal defect in the system of German defence.¹ The campaign of 1794 affords a striking confirmation of this observation. After having driven the French forces, during the campaign of 1793, from the field, and compelled them to seek shelter in intrenched camps or fortified towns, the Allies were so much impeded by the siege of the fortresses which lay in their road, that they were compelled to halt in their career of success ; and France had time to complete the vast armaments which afterwards proved so fatal to Europe. When the Republic, on the other hand, became the invading power in 1794, the want of any fortified towns to resist their progress enabled them to overrun Flanders, and drive the Allies in a few weeks beyond the Rhine. This consideration is of vital importance, both in the estimate of the relative power of France and the neighbouring states, and in all measures intended to restrain its ambitious projects. It was the same in ancient times. The Roman armies, unable to withstand the cavalry of Hannibal in the field, found a respite from their disasters, after the slaughter of Cannæ, in the numerous fortified towns with which Italy was studded. From the moment that the war from one of battles became one of sieges, the fortune of the Carthaginian conqueror began to waver ; and the mighty torrent which had rolled with impetuous fury from the Ebro to the Tiber, was lost in surmounting the inconsiderable fortresses of Campania and Apulia.²

There are few spectacles in nature so sublime as that of a people bravely combating for their liberties against a powerful and vindictive enemy. That spectacle was exhibited in the most striking manner by the French nation during this campaign. The same impartial justice which condemns with unmeasured severity the bloody internal, must admire the dignified and resolute external conduct of the Convention. With unbending firmness,

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

¹ Archduke
Charles, i.
p. 274.

² Arnold's
Rome, iii.
176, 256.

115.
Sublime
aspect of
France at
this period
in external
affairs.

CHAP.
XVI.

1794.

though often with atrocious cruelty, they coerced alike internal revolt and foreign violence ; and, selecting out of the innumerable ranks of their defenders the most worthy, laid the foundation of that illustrious school of military chiefs who afterwards sustained the fortunes of the empire. It is melancholy to be obliged to admit, that it was their cruelty which was one cause of their triumphs ; and that the fortunes of the Republic might have sunk under its difficulties, but for the inflexible severity with which its government overawed the discontented. The iron rule of Terror undoubtedly drew out of the agonies of the state the means of its ultimate deliverance. The impartial justice of Providence apparently made that terrific period the means of punishing the national sins of both the contending parties ; and while the sufferings of the empire were the worthy retribution of its cruelty, and the necessary consequences of its injustice, the triumphs to which they led brought deserved chastisement on those powers who had sought, in that suffering, the means of unjust aggrandisement.

CHAPTER XVII.

WAR IN POLAND.

PROVIDENCE has so interwoven human affairs, that, when we wish to retrace the revolutions of a people, and to investigate the causes of their grandeur or misfortunes, we are insensibly conducted, step by step, to their cradle. The slightest consideration of the history of Poland must be sufficient to prove that that great nation, always combating, often victorious, but never securing its conquests, never obtaining the blessings of a stable government, has from the earliest times been on the decline. It emerged from the shock which overthrew the Roman empire, valiant, powerful, and extensive; from that hour it has invariably drooped, until at length it became the victim of its ancient provinces. The kingdom of Poland formerly extended from the Borysthenes to the Danube, and from the Euxine to the Baltic. The Sarmatia of the ancients, it embraced within its bosom the original seat of those nations which subverted the Roman empire : Prussia, Moravia, Bohemia, Hungary, the Ukraine, Courland, Livonia, are all fragments of its mighty dominion. The Goths, who appeared as suppliants on the Danube, and were ferried across by Roman hands, never to recede ; the Huns, who under Attila spread desolation through the empire ; the Slavonians, who overran the greater part of Europe,—emerged from its vast and uncultivated plains. But its subsequent progress has but ill corresponded to such a commencement. While, in all other states, liberty, riches, power, and glory,

CHAP.
XVII.

1794.

1.
Immense
extent of
Poland in
former
times.

CHAP.
XVII.

1794.

¹ Salvandy,
i. 18.2.
Physical
description
of Poland.

have advanced with equal steps, and the victories of one age have contributed to the advancement of that which succeeded it ; in Poland alone the greatest triumphs have been immediately succeeded by the greatest reverses ; the establishment of internal freedom has led to nothing but external disaster, and the deliverer of Europe in one age was in the next swept from the book of nations.¹

The name of Poland, derived from the word signifying a plain (*pole*), expresses its real geographical character. It consists almost entirely of an immense level surface, which extends—with the exception only of a range of low hills that, to the south of Volhynia, branch out from the Carpathian mountains—from the shores of the Baltic to those of the Euxine. Part of this vast expanse is composed of rich alluvial soil, but the greater part of it is a sandy plain, of a dark-red colour on the shores of the sea, but white in the interior of the country. Pomerania, part of Denmark, and nearly the whole of Prussia, formerly provinces of Poland, consist of the same sandy flat. The waves of the ocean, or of floods which, in former revolutions of the globe, have rolled over this wide extent of level ground, have strewed its surface with huge blocks of granite and other rocks foreign to the Polish territory, which have evidently been brought from a great distance ; and in many places vast collections of bones of the elephant, the rhinoceros, and other tropical animals, as well as the mammoth, the mastodon, and other monsters, the race of which is now extinct upon the earth, are found, and attract the wonder alike of the illiterate peasant and learned observer of nature. This immense plain nowhere rises more than a few hundred feet above the level of the sea, and the ascent to the most elevated part is so gradual as to be imperceptible, save from the direction of the rivers, which are very numerous, and form a remarkable feature in the country.²

² Malte
Brun, vi.
474, 476.
Roepell,
Geschichte
Polens, i.
3, 5.

Notwithstanding this general flat surface, the summit-level of the country is very distinctly marked, from the

one side of which the waters flow to the Euxine, from the other to the Baltic Sea. This summit-level itself, however, is not in general a ridge, or range of hills, but a swampy expanse, in the marshes of which the principal streams of the country take their rise ; and, as with the rivers Amazons and Orinoco in the pampas of South America, the surface between their sources is so flat that in floods they communicate with each other. This is particularly the case with the Pripecz, a tributary of the Dnieper, which in spring is connected with the feeders of the Bug and the Niemen. The principal rivers which descend from the southern declivity of this marshy plateau are the Dniester and the Dnieper, with the great tributary of the latter, the Bug ; to the north flows the Vistula, which, taking its rise in the Carpathian Mountains, after being swelled by fifty tributary streams, such as the San, the Pilica, and the Narew, rolls its ample waves to the Baltic. One of these, the San, rises under the shade of a huge oak, which overhangs on the other side the fountains of the Theisse and of the Stry, which are among the principal sources of the Dniester. The Vartha and the Niemen traverse also the northern plains of Poland ; and their waters, flowing in a bed but little depressed below the general surface of the adjacent country, frequently overflow, and convert the whole plain, to a considerable distance on either side, into a great lake. On the other hand, the Dniester and the Dnieper, and the other rivers which descend towards the Euxine, meander in deep beds, having steep banks of rock or gravel, which restrain their ample currents even in the greatest floods, and render the general surface of the adjacent country comparatively dry and salubrious.¹

CHAP.
XVII.

1794.

3.
Its great
rivers.

¹ Malte
Brun, vii.
475, 479.
Roepell, i.
7, 11. Dia-
gossi, lib.
i. p. 18.

Poland has few minerals in its bosom, a peculiarity which frees it equally from the wealth consequent on the working of mines, and the social depravity which such operations seldom fail, in the end, to induce in their train. For this defect, however, it has received more than a

^{4.}
Great fer-
tility of its
soil.

CHAP.
XVII.

1794.

compensation in the broad expanse of its level surface, and the general fertility of its soil. The plains of the Ukraine, or of Poland south of the ridge which divides the flowing of its waters, have long been celebrated for their extraordinary and surpassing fertility, and, like the Delta of Egypt, or the plain of Mesopotamia, yield the richest crops with very little care from the husbandman. Podolia, also, on the southern declivity of Poland, hardly less rich, exhibits more varied and agreeable features. Pleasant hills, often crowned by beautiful groves, fill the whole province, which extends from the Dniester to the Boh, and is bounded on the north by the plains of Volhynia, on the south-east by the steppes of the Ukraine. These hills, which almost become mountains in the neighbourhood of Medryz Zee, exhibit alternately fertile valleys and healthful pastures. The soil, where it is arable, yields noble crops with hardly any cultivation; and so far back as the middle of the fifteenth century, Greece and the islands of the Archipelago were supplied by Podolian wheat, transported to their shores in Venetian vessels. The climate of this favoured province is less severe than that of the other parts of Poland. While they are still clothed with the garb of winter, the verdure of spring has already appeared on its sunny slopes. Melons, mulberries, and other southern fruits, ripen without care in the open air; and as summer is free from the malaria which infests the plains of the Ukraine, so winter is from its icy cold.¹

¹ Roepell,
Geschichte
Polens, i. 11.

5.
Face of the
country in
the northern
provinces.

To the north of the summit-level, in the plains watered by the Vistula and its tributary streams, the soil is less rich, and stands more in need of the artificial aid of draining and manure. But a very slight application of these advantages is sufficient to make it produce the finest crops of wheat, barley, oats, and rye; and if cultivated in a superior manner, and opened up by canals, railroads, and common roads, for which the level surface offers the greatest possible advantages, it is capable of being made

to rival the plain of Lombardy or the fields of Flanders in variety and riches of agricultural produce. Already it is considered as the granary of Europe ; the banks of the Vistula are to the British empire, in seasons of domestic scarcity, what those of the Nile were to the ancient Romans. Wretched, however, is the cultivation, deplorable the condition of the serfs, by whose labours these noble crops are reared. Ploughs and harrows of the rudest construction turn up the soil ; scarcely any manure enriches the fields ; frequent and long-continued fallows alone restore the exhausted fertility of nature. Raising the finest crops of red wheat, the indigent husbandman lives only on black rye-bread : water is his sole drink, though his hands reap extensive crops of barley ; and the luxuries of animal food and comfortable dwellings are unknown to the peasantry inhabiting a country where the hand of nature has covered the earth with rich and boundless pastures, and a profusion of fine forests has furnished the most ample materials for the construction of houses.¹

CHAP.
XVII.

1794.

¹ Roepell,
i. 9, 12.
Surowrecki
de la Dé-
cadence de
la Pologne,
154. Malte
Brun, vii.
484, 486.

To the general flat and uniform character of Polish scenery, an exception must be made in regard to that part of the country where the Vistula takes its rise. Numerous rocky eminences, interspersed with limpid streams, there ascend with a uniform slope towards the Carpathian Mountains, and their summits are often crowned with venerable castles and monasteries, which throw an air of antiquity and grandeur over the scenery. It is there that Wawell, the once magnificent castle of the royal race of the Jagellons, looks down on the ancient capital of the mighty Polish empire, where its kings, so long taken from their race, were crowned ; it is there that, adorned with numerous steeples, and splendid churches, and ancient edifices, Cracow lies stretched at the foot of the mountains in the valley of the Vistula. Everything in that romantic region bespeaks the former grandeur and present decay of Poland. Beyond it, on a high mountain, stands the monastery of Tyniec, one of the richest and

6.
Romantic
scenery in
the neigh-
bourhood
of the Car-
pathian
Mountains.

CHAP.
XVII.

1794.

most ancient abbeys of the Benedictines in the country. On one side is seen the picturesque mount of Kosciusko ; to the south, the distant summits of the Carpathian range. Less hilly, but by no means level, is the land north of Cracow, towards the upper Vistula. It consists of a plateau, eight or nine hundred feet above the sea, intersected by deep and precipitous ravines, like those of Saxon Switzerland in Germany, clothed with sable woods, and often surmounted by princely castles and noble chateaus now in ruins. On one of the precipices, surrounded by rich foliage, stands Oycow, once the splendid residence of Casimir the Great. Near the sources of the Pilica, in the middle of a vast forest, stands Ogrodzeniec, formerly the seat of the mighty Firley. Everything in this romantic region reminds the traveller of departed greatness ; and in traversing these deserted halls or ruined fanes, the mournful motto of the Courtenays recurs to the mind, "Quomodo lapsus : quid feci?"¹*

¹ Roepell,
Geschichte
Polens, i.
3, 4, 7.

7.
Small cities
in Poland.

Overrun by Jews, and but little supported either by the industry of their own inhabitants, or the wealth of the adjacent country, the towns of Poland exhibit a melancholy proof of the extent to which the folly of man can render unavailing all the choicest gifts of nature. Though the total population of the country, after the partition of 1772, was still above fourteen millions, Warsaw, Lublin, and Cracow, were the only towns in it which deserved the name of cities, the first of which contained at that period only ninety thousand inhabitants, the second, twenty-five, the third, twelve thousand.† At this time, notwithstanding the great increase in every branch of

* How am I fallen ! what have I done ?

† The following is the present population of the principal Polish towns :—

Warsaw,	.	.	.	.	136,554
Cracow,	.	.	.	.	25,000
Lublin,	.	.	.	.	12,000
Kalisch,	.	.	.	.	7,300
Plock,	.	.	.	.	6,500
Zamosc,	.	.	.	.	5,000
Sewalki,	.	.	.	.	3,500

—MALTE BRUN, vii. 534-543.

industry which has taken place under the severe but regular and steady government of Russia, the Polish towns, considering the prodigious natural resources of the country, exhibit a deplorable picture of squalid misery, of useless pride, and general idleness. Such activity as does exist among them is almost entirely to be ascribed to the Jews, who form, as it were, a nation by themselves encamped in Poland, and have gradually, from their industrious habits, engrossed all the lucrative employments in it. The kingdom of Poland, properly so called, now entirely absorbed by Russia, contains 50,960 geographical miles—an extent of surface greater than that of England and Wales together, which contain 46,000, but which is thinly peopled by only 4,582,000 inhabitants. Such is the last remnant, and it under foreign dominion, of the once mighty empire of Poland; of the conquests of Boleslas, and the dominions of the Jagellons; of a country which, in the days of its greatness, carried its victorious arms from the Baltic to the Euxine, and from Moscow to the Elbe.¹

CHAP.
XVII.

1794.

¹ Malte
Brun, vii.
527, 530,
543.

This extraordinary decline has all arisen from one cause—that Poland has retained, till a very recent period, the independence and *equality* of savage life. It has neither been subjugated by more polished, nor has it itself vanquished more civilised states. The restlessness and valour of the pastoral character have remained unchanged during fifteen hundred years, neither grafted on the stock of urban liberty, nor moulded by the institutions of civilised society. Poland shows what in its original state was the equality of the shepherd life. Neither the resistance, nor the tastes, nor the intelligence, nor the blood of vanquished nations, have altered in its inhabitants the inclinations and passions of the savage character. We may see in its history what would have been the fate of all the Northern nations, if their fierce and unbending temper had not been tempered by the blood, and modified by the institutions,² of a more advanced civil-

8.
Causes of its
continued
disasters.² Salv. i. 29.

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isation, and in the anarchy of its diets, what would have been the representative system had the opinion of Montesquieu been well founded, that it was found in the woods.

9.

It has retained the pastoral and independent character unmixed.

The shepherds who wandered in the plains of Sarmatia were, like all other pastoral tribes, inflamed by the strongest passion for that savage freedom which consists in leading a life exempt from control—in roaming at will over boundless plains, resting where they chose, and departing when they wished. In their incursions into the Roman provinces they collected immense troops of captives, who were compelled to perform the works of drudgery, in which their masters disdained to engage; to attend the cattle, drive the waggons, and make the arms. Their imperious lords, acknowledging no superior themselves, knew no restraint in the treatment of their inferiors. They exercised a grievous tyranny over that unhappy race, with the same energy with which they would have resisted any attempt to encroach on their own independence. Such as Poland then was, it has ever since continued—a race of jealous freemen and iron-bound slaves; a vast and wild democracy ruling a captive people;

———“*Ferrea juga
Insanumque forum.*” *

10.

The representative system arose from the Christian councils.

It is a mistake to suppose that the representative system was found in the woods. What was found there was not anything resembling parliaments, but Polish equality. The pastoral nations of the North, equally with the citizens of the republics of antiquity, had no idea of the exercise of the rights of freemen but by the concurrence of *all* the citizens. Of course, this privilege could only be exercised by a small number of them when the state became populous; and hence the narrow base on which, with them, the fabric of liberty was framed. The assemblies of the Champ-de-Mai, accordingly, like the early convocations

* ———“*An iron yoke
And senseless forum.*” *

of the Normans in England, were attended by all the freemen who held of the king; and sixty thousand Norman horsemen assembled at Winchester, to deliberate with the Conqueror concerning the vanquished kingdom.¹ This was the original system in all the European states, and this is what the Polish diet always continued to be. It was the Christian Church, the parent of so many lofty doctrines and new ideas, which had the glory of offering to the world, amidst the wreck of ancient institutions, the model of a form of government which gives to all classes the right of suffrage, by establishing a system which may embrace the remotest interests; which preserves the energy, and avoids the evils, of democracy; which maintains the tribune, and shuns the strife of the forum. The Christian councils were the first example of representative assemblies; there were united the whole Roman world; there a priesthood, which embraced the civilised earth, assembled by means of delegates to deliberate on the affairs of the Universal Church. When Europe revived, it adopted the same model. Every nation by degrees borrowed the customs of the Church, then the sole depositary of the traditions of civilisation. It was the religion of the vanquished people—it was the clergy, who instructed them in this admirable system, which flourished in the councils of Nice, Sardis, and Byzantium, centuries before it was heard of in Western Europe, and which did not arise in the woods of Germany, but in the catacombs of Rome during the sufferings of the primitive Church.²

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¹ Thierry,
ii. 286.²Salv.i.107,
108.

Vienna was the frontier station of the Roman empire. It never extended into the Sarmatian wilds; and hence the chief cause of the continued calamities of the descendants of their first inhabitants. It was the infusion of the free spirit of the Scythian tribes into the decaying provinces of the Roman empire, and the union of barbaric energy with ancient and worn-out civilisation, which produced the glories of modern Europe. In Poland alone, savage

11.
No inter-
mixture of
foreign cus-
toms in
Poland.

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independence has ever remained unmodified by foreign admixture ; Scythian descent, unchanged by foreign blood ; barbaric passions, untamed by foreign wisdom ;—and the customs of the earliest ages have continued the same down to the partition of the monarchy. After representative assemblies had been established for centuries in Germany, France, and England, the Poles adhered to the ancient custom of summoning every man to discuss, sword in hand, the affairs of the republic. A hundred thousand horsemen met in the field of Volo, near Warsaw, to deliberate on public affairs ; and the distractions of these stormy diets weakened the nation even more than the attacks of its foreign enemies. Among them was established, to their sorrow, the real system which was invented in the woods.¹

¹ Salv. i. 109.
Rulh. i. 10,
14.

12.
Its society
differently
constituted
from any in
Europe.

In Poland, accordingly, the structure of society was essentially different from that which obtained in any other part of Europe. The feudal system, the chain of military dependence from the throne to the cottage, has in every age been there unknown. The republic was composed entirely of two classes, both numerous and mutually hostile : the one destined to labour, dejection, and servitude ; the other to independence, activity, and war. The iron band of a resident and firmly based body of foreign proprietors, which has so powerfully held together the discordant elements of modern society—which united the vanquished, strong in their civilisation, their laws, and their religion, and the victors, strong in their power, their valour, and their conquests ; which bound alike the nobility and the priesthood, the municipalities and the throne ; which in the wisdom of Providence, amidst many evils, produced innumerable blessings—was wanting to the Poles. Thence it is that Poland is no more. Thence it is that she has ever exhibited the spectacle of a nation without a people, since the numerous class of slaves could not deserve that name ; of armies alike without discipline, infantry, or artillery ;² of

² Salv. i. 31.
Rulh. i. 14.

a state undefended by frontier towns ; of cities without a race of burghers, without commerce or industry ; of a republic where the supreme power was practically annihilated, for the restraints on it were omnipotent.

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The tastes and the habits of the nomad tribes have, almost to our time, predominated among the Poles. Their language, their manners, even their dress, long remained unchanged. The frequent use of furs, the flowing pelisse, caps of the skins of wild beasts, the absence of linen, and the magnificence of their arms, are the characteristics of their national costume. Till within these few years they wore the singular crown of hair, which in the time of the Scythians encircled their bare heads. The passion for a wandering life has been transmitted to their latest posterity, and remains undiminished amidst all the refinements of civilisation. To travel in the country, living in tents, to pass from one encampment to another, has been in every age one of the most favourite amusements of the Polish noblesse ; and it was in such occupations that the last years of the great Sobieski were employed. This fierce and unbending race of freemen preserved inviolate, as the Magna Charta of Poland, the right to assemble in person, and deliberate on the public affairs of the state. That terrible assembly, where all the proprietors of the soil were convoked, constituted at once the military strength of the nation in war, and its legislature in peace. There were discussed alike the public concerns of the republic, the private feuds or grievances of individuals, the questions of peace or war, the formation of laws, the division of plunder, and the election of the sovereign.¹

13.
They still retain the taste and habits of the Nomad tribes.

¹ Rulh. i. 15.
Salv. i. 39.

In the eyes of this haughty race, the will of a freeman was a thing which no human power should attempt to subjugate ; and therefore the fundamental principle of all their deliberations was, that *unanimity* was essential to every resolution. This relic of savage equality, of which the traces are still to be found in the far-famed jury

14.
Their early and indomitable democratic spirit

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system of England, was productive of incalculable evils to the republic ; and yet so blind are men to the cause of their own ruin, that it was uniformly adhered to with enthusiastic resolution by the Poles, and is even spoken of with undisguised admiration by their national historians. But all human institutions must involve some method of extricating public affairs ; and as unanimity was not to be expected among so numerous and impassioned a body as their diet, and the idea was not to be entertained for a moment of constraining the will of any citizen by an adverse majority, they adopted the only other means of expediting business,—they *massacred the recusants*. This measure appeared to them an incomparably lesser evil than carrying measures by a majority. “Because,” said they, “acts of violence are few in number, and affect only the individual sufferers ; but if once the precedent is established of compelling the minority to yield to the majority, there is an end to any security for the liberties of the people.” It may easily be imagined what discords and divisions were nursed up under such a system. Fanned by the flame excited at all their national diets, the different provinces of the republic have in every age nourished the most profound animosity against each other. The waywodes and palatinates into which every province was divided, for the administration of justice, or the arrangements of war, became divided against each other, and transmitted the feuds of the earliest times to their remotest descendants. “That hierarchy of enmities,” as the Poles expressed it, descended even to private families : in the progress of time, religious discord divided the whole republic into two parties nearly equal in strength, and implacable in hostility ; and Poland was transformed into an immense field of combat, destined never to know either tranquillity or truce till it passed under the yoke of a foreign master.¹

¹ Salv. i. 40.
41. Rulh. i.
11, 24, 25.

The clergy—that important body who have done so

much for the freedom of Europe—never formed a separate order, or possessed any spiritual influence in Poland. Composed entirely of the nobles, they had no sympathy with the serfs, whom they disdained to admit to any of their sacred offices. Their bishops interfered, not as prelates, but as barons—not with the wand of peace, but with the sword of dissension. The priesthood formed in their stormy diets a sort of tribunes, subject to the passions of the multitude, but exempt, by reason of their sacred character, from the danger which constituted a check upon their extravagance. This was another consequence of the Poles not having settled in a conquered country. The clergy of the other European states, drawn from the vanquished people, formed a link between them and their conquerors; and, by reason of the influence which their intellectual superiority conferred, gradually softened the yoke of bondage to the vanquished; the Polish priesthood, composed entirely of the nobility, added to the chains of slavery the fetters of superstition.¹

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15.

Clergy
formed a
different
body from
any in
Europe.¹ Salv. i. 62.

As if everything was destined to concur for the disorganisation of Poland, the inequality of fortunes, and the rise of urban industry, the source of so much benefit to all the other European monarchies, was there productive only of evil. Fearful of being compelled to divide their power with the inferior classes of society, when elevated by riches and intelligence, the nobles affixed the stigma of dishonour to every lucrative or useful profession. Their maxim was, that nobility is not lost by indigence or domestic servitude, but is totally destroyed by commerce and industry. Their constant policy was to debar the serfs from all knowledge of the use of arms, both because they had learned to fear, and because they continued to despise them. In fine, the Polish nobility, strenuously resisting every gradation of power as a usurpation, every kind of industry as a degradation, every attempt at superiority as an outrage, remained to the close of their career an idle and haughty democracy.²

16.

Nobility
never en-
gaged in any
profession
or trade.² Salv. i. 72.

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17.

Which all
fell into the
hands of the
Jews.

at open variance with all the principles on which the prosperity of society depends.

As some species of industry, however, is indispensable where wealth has begun to accumulate, and as the vast possessions of the nobility gave great encouragement to those who would minister to their wants, the industry of towns insensibly increased, and an urban population gradually arose. But as the nobles were too proud, and the serfs too indigent, or too ignorant, to engage in such employments, they fell exclusively into the hands of a foreign race, who were willing to submit to the degradation they imposed for the sake of the profit they brought. The Jews spread like a leprosy over the country, monopolising every lucrative employment, excluding the peasantry from the chance even of bettering their condition by emerging out of it; and superadding to the instinctive aversion of the free citizens at every species of labour, the horror connected with the occupations of that hated race. Thus, the rise of towns, and the privileges of corporations, the origin of free institutions in so many other countries, were there productive only of evil, by augmenting the disinclination of all classes to engage in their pursuits; the Jews multiplied in a country where they were enabled to engross all the industrial occupations; until at last above half of the whole descendants of Abraham were found in what formerly were the Polish dominions.¹

¹ Salv. i. 84,
85.

18.

Liberty and
equality the
early principles
of the
people.

Five hundred years before liberty and equality became the watchword of the French Revolution, they had been the favourite principles of the Polish republic. Anarchy and disorder did not prevail in the country because the throne was elective; but the throne became elective, because the people were too jealous of their privileges to admit of hereditary succession. For a hundred and sixty years the race of the Jagellons sat on the throne of Poland, with as regular a succession as the Plantagenets of England; and the dynasty of the Piasts enjoyed the government

for four hundred years; but all the efforts of the monarchs of these houses were unequal to the formation of a regular government. Contrary to what obtained in every other part of the world, it was always the great kings of Poland who were ultimately overthrown, and their reigns which were the most stormy of its annals. This arose from their talents and eminence; for the first rendered them the objects of jealousy, the last of envy. The supreme authority, which elsewhere in the progress of civilisation was strengthened by the spoils of feudal power, became in Poland only weakened by the lapse of time. All the efforts of their greatest monarchs toward aggrandisement were shattered against the compact, independent, and courageous body of nobles, whom the crown could neither overawe by menaces, nor subdue by violence. In the plenitude of their democratic spirit, they would for long admit no distinction among themselves, but that which arose from actual employment; and never recognised, till a very recent period, the titles and honours which, in other states, have long been hereditary. Even when they were established, the jurisdictions were only for life. Democratic equality could not brook the idea of a hereditary body of rulers. Their wayodes or military chieftains, their palatines or leaders of counties, their castellans or governors of castles, from the earliest period down to recent times, enjoyed their authority for a limited period only. These officers, far from being able in Poland, as in other states, to render their dignities hereditary, were not always even nominated by the king. Their authority, especially that of the palatines, gave equal umbrage to the monarchs whom they were bound to obey, as to the nobles whom they were intended to lead. There was thus authority and power nowhere in the state.

The kings of the Piast race made frequent and able efforts to create a gradation of rank in the midst of that democracy, and a body of burghers by the side of these

¹ Rulh. i. 5,
14, 24. Salv.
i. 71, 72,
123.

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19.

Crown was
always elec-
tive.

nobles; but all their attempts proved ineffectual. A race of monarchs, whose succession was frequently interrupted, and their authority always contested, could not carry on any steady or consistent plan of government; while, unlike all other states, it was the people alone who there maintained a systematic and uniform line of conduct. Unhappily it was systematic only in absurdity, uniform in the production of ruin. England can have no difficulty in understanding its condition, for it was that of Ireland, with all its passions and none of its external control. The crown of Poland, though enjoyed long by the great families of the Jagellons and the Piasts, has always been elective. The king possessed the disposal of all offices in the republic; and a principal part of his duty consisted in going from province to province to administer justice in person. "By my faith!" said Henry of Valois, when elected to the throne, "these Poles have made me nothing but a judge!" But the nobility themselves carried into execution all his sentences by their own armed force. The command of the troops was not in general conferred upon the sovereign; and as there never was any considerable standing army in the service of the republic, the military force of the throne was altogether nugatory. Poland affords the most decisive demonstration that the chief evil of an elective monarchy, and that which has always made it so calamitous where it has prevailed, is to be found, not in the contests for the crown, which may be transient, but in the prostration of its power, which is lasting, and renders the protection of a stable government unknown in the state.¹

¹ Salv. i. 72,
128. Rulh.
i. 17, 18, 19.

20.

General As-
semblies of
the people,
and the *libe-
rum veto*.

But the insurmountable evil, which in every age has opposed the formation of a regular government in this unhappy country, was the privilege, too firmly established to be ever shaken, which all the citizens had, of assembling together to deliberate on the affairs of the state, and of any one interposing a direct negative on the most important resolutions. So far from adopting the prudent

maxim of all regular governments, that a civil war is the greatest of evils, they have by this institution given to their insurrections a legal form. From generation to generation the maxim has been handed down by the Poles :—"Burn your houses, and wander over the country with your arms in your hands, rather than submit to the smallest infringement on your liberties." These assemblies, when once met, united in themselves the powers of all the magistrates ; they were to that republic what the dictatorship was to ancient Rome. A Pole, compelled to submit to a plurality of suffrages, would have considered himself subjected to the most grievous despotism ; and consequently no resolution of the diet was binding, unless it was unanimously agreed to by *all* the citizens. Any citizen, by the privilege of the *liberum veto*, had the power of dissolving the most numerous of these assemblies, or negating their most important acts ; and although the Poles were fully sensible of the ruinous nature of this privilege, and pursued with eternal maledictions the individual who exercised it, yet they never could be prevailed upon to consent to its abandonment.¹

¹ Rulh. i. 18,
24. Salv. i.
111.

These assemblies, so famous in Polish history, so fatal to her inhabitants, presented so extraordinary a spectacle, that it is hardly possible, in reading even the most authentic descriptions of them, to believe that we have not stepped into the regions of Eastern romance. The plain of Volo, to the west of Warsaw, was the theatre, from the earliest times, of the popular elections. Soon the impatient *pospolite*, or general assembly of the free Poles, covered that vast area with its waves, like an army prepared to commence an assault on a fortified town. The innumerable piles of arms ; the immense tables round which faction united its supporters ; a thousand jousts with the javelin or the lance ; a thousand squadrons engaged in mimic war ; a thousand parties of palatines, governors of castles, and other dignified authorities, who traversed the ranks, distributing exhortations, party songs,

21.
Description
of these
assemblies.

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and largesses ; a thousand cavalcades of gentlemen, who rode, according to custom, with their battle-axes by their side, and discussed at the gallop the dearest interests of the republic ; innumerable quarrels, originating in drunkenness, and terminating in blood : Such were the scenes of tumult, amusement, and war—a faithful mirror of Poland—which, as far as the eye could reach, filled the plain. The arena was closed in by a vast circle of tents, which embraced, as in an immense girdle, the plain of Volo, the shores of the Vistula, and the spires of Warsaw. The horizon seemed bounded by a range of snowy mountains, of which the summits were discernible in the hazy distance by their dazzling whiteness. The camp formed another city, with its markets, its gardens, its hotels, and its monuments. There the great displayed their Oriental magnificence ; the nobles, the palatines, vied with each other in the splendour of their horses and equipages ; and the stranger who beheld for the first time that luxury, worthy of the last and greatest of the nomad people, was never weary of admiring the immense hotels, the porticoes, the colonnades, the galleries of painted or gilded stuffs, the castles of cotton and silk, with their drawbridges, towers, and ditches.¹

¹ Salv. ii.
190.

22.
Order of the
proceedings.

On the day of the elections the three orders mounted on horseback. The princes, the palatines, the bishops, the prelates, proceeded towards the plain of Volo, surrounded by eighty thousand mounted citizens, any one of whom might, at the expiry of a few hours, find himself king of Poland ; and each of whom enjoyed the absolute power of stopping at pleasure the whole proceedings. They all bore in their countenances, even under the livery or banners of a master, the pride arising from that ruinous privilege. The European dress nowhere appeared on that solemn occasion. The children of the desert strove to hide the furs and skins in which they were clothed under chains of gold and the glitter of jewels. Their bonnets were composed of panther skins ; eagle

or heron plumes surmounted them : on their front were the most splendid precious stones. Their robes of sable or ermine were bound with velvet or silver : their girdles studded with jewels ; over all their furs were suspended chains of diamonds. One hand of each nobleman was without a glove ; on it was the splendid ring on which the arms of his family were engraved, the mark, as in ancient Rome, of the equestrian order—another proof of the intimate connection between the race, the customs, and the traditions of the northern tribes, and those of the founders of the Eternal City.¹

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¹ Salv. ii.
192, 194.

But nothing in this rivalry of magnificence could equal the splendour of their arms. Double poniards, double scimitars, set with brilliants ; bucklers of costly workmanship, battle-axes enriched in silver, and glittering with emeralds and sapphires ; bows and arrows richly gilt, which were borne at festivals, in remembrance of the ancient customs of the country, were to be seen on every side. The horses shared in this mixture of barbarism and refinement. Sometimes cased in iron, at others decorated with the richest colours, they bent under the weight of the sabres, the lances and javelins, by which the senatorial order marked their rank. The bishops were distinguished by their grey or green hats, and yellow or red pantaloons, magnificently embroidered with diverse colours. Often they laid aside their sacerdotal habits, and signalised their address as young cavaliers, by the beauty of their arms, and the management of their horses. In that crowd of the equestrian order, there was no gentleman so humble as not to try to rival this magnificence. Many carried, in furs and arms, their whole fortunes on their backs. Numbers had sold their votes to some of the candidates, for the vanity of appearing with some additional ornament before their fellow-citizens. And the people, whose dazzled eyes beheld all this magnificence, were almost without clothing ; their long beards, naked legs, and filth, indicated,² even more strongly than their

23.
Splendour of
the dresses.² Salv. ii.
194, 197.

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pale visages and dejected air, all the miseries of servitude.

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24.

Partial introduction of the representative system.

At length the utter impossibility of getting anything done with these immense assemblies, frequently embracing a hundred thousand citizens on horseback, and the experienced difficulty of finding them subsistence for any considerable time, led to the introduction, to a certain extent, of the representative system. This change took place in the year 1467, about two hundred years after it had been established in England, and a hundred and eighty after its introduction into Germany. Unfortunately, however, it never prevailed generally in the kingdom, and was accompanied with such restrictions as tended to increase rather than diminish the divisions of the people. The labouring classes were not at all represented; and the nobility never abandoned, and frequently exercised, their right of assembling in person on all important occasions. These general diets being, after this change, rarer, were more generally attended; and as they were assembled only on extraordinary occasions—as the election of a king, or a question of peace or war—the passions of the people were increased by the importance of their suffrages, and inexperience added to the sudden intoxication of absolute power.¹

¹ Rulh. i. 23.
Salv. i. 110,
113.

25.

Pledges universally exacted from the deputies.

In the true spirit of their democratic institutions, the Poles had no sooner established a representative system, than they surrounded it with such checks, as not only rendered it totally useless, but positively hurtful. Not unfrequently the electors, terrified at the powers with which they had invested their representatives, hastened, sword in hand, to the place of their meeting, prepared, if necessary, to oppose open force to the laws. These stormy assemblages were called “Diets under the buckler.” The representatives continued in the new assemblies the ruinous law of unanimity, in spite of the advice of the wisest men, and in opposition to their continual remonstrances. The power of putting by a single vote a nega-

tive on all proceedings, of course, was more frequently exercised by one among four hundred deputies, who was intrusted with the interest of an extensive palatinate, than by an insulated individual amidst a hundred thousand of his fellow-citizens. The check, too, which the terror of being massacred imposed upon the exercise of this right in the primary assembly, was removed when, in the Chamber of Deputies, uplifted sabres were no longer ready to exterminate the recusant. Moreover the electors, with the jealousy of the democratic spirit, uniformly exacted from every representative a pledge how he was to vote on every question that came before the Assembly ; and after every session they held what were called *post-comitial diets*, the object of which was to bring him to account for the vote he had given on every occasion. In these diets the representatives ran the most imminent risk of being murdered, if they had deviated at all from the instructions they had received.¹

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¹ Rullh. i. 24,
26. Salv.
i. 114.

The sense of this danger made the deputies adhere strictly to the orders given them ; and as their instructions were extremely various, the practical result was, that unanimity was impossible, and business could not be carried through. To avoid this, the majority, in some instances, proceeded by main force to pass measures in spite of the minority ; but as this was deemed a direct violation of the constitution, it invariably led to civil war. Confederations of the minorities were established, diets appointed, marshals elected, and these deplorable factions, which alternately had the king a chief and a captive, were regarded as a constitutional mode of extricating the rights of the people. This right of opposition, in the space of two centuries, had the effect of utterly annihilating every other power in the government. The deputies, without ever having made a direct attack upon the throne—without ever having attempted to wrest from the king or the senate the power allotted to them in the constitution—succeeded at length in suspending and neutralising every

26.
Evils of the
liberum
veto pos-
sessed by
each deputy.

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other branch of the legislature. The popular attachment to the veto augmented with the progress of wealth, and the increasing opulence of the great families who composed the senate ; as it reduced all the citizens, at least on some occasions, to a state of perfect equality. The only astonishing thing is, that, with such institutions, the valour of the Polish nobility should so long have concealed the weakness arising from their unruly disposition. One would imagine that a people with such a government could not exist a year ; and yet, such was their mingled energy and infatuation, they seemed never wearied either of victory or folly.¹

¹ Rulh. i. 26,
27. Salv. i.
115.

27.

Great in-
crease of the
democratic
power at the
close of the
sixteenth
century.

The political crisis which, at the close of the sixteenth century, convulsed all Europe, reinstated the Poles at once in all their ruinous democratic privileges, which the influence of their preceding monarchs had somewhat impaired. In the year 1573, on the death of the last race of the Jagellons, the nation with one voice reasserted and obtained all its original immunities. The command of the armies, and the administration of justice, were taken from the crown ; two hetmans appointed, one for Lithuania, and one for Poland ; each was invested with an absolute command over the forces of these rival provinces of the republic, and they too often, by their jealousies, marred the effect of the most glorious triumphs. Meanwhile the administration of justice was confided to a few supreme tribunals, composed of the nobility, who were changed every fifteen months, by new elections, as if to prevent justice ever being administered by those who had any acquaintance with law. Two standing armies were directed to be formed, one for Lithuania, the other for Poland : but they hardly amounted in all to ten thousand men ; and even for these the jealousy of the nobility would only permit them to vote the most scanty supplies, which required to be renewed at each successive diet. In consequence of this circumstance, the Poles never had a regular force on which they could rely, worthy either of

the name or the strength of the republic ; and when all the adjoining states were daily consolidating their strength, and providing for the public defence by powerful standing armies, they had almost nothing to rely on for the maintenance of their independence but the tumultuary array of barbarous times.¹

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¹ Salv. i. 125,
127. Rulh.
i. 31.

Their forces, such as they were, consisted of five classes : the national troops, or a small body of regular soldiers, paid and equipped by the republic ; the *pospolite*, or general assembly of all the free citizens on horseback ; the armed valets, all forming part of the noble or free class, whose rapine in general did more harm than their courage did service ; the artillery, which, from the want of funds for its support, was usually in the most wretched condition ; and the mercenaries, composed chiefly of Germans, whose services would have been of great importance, had their fidelity been secured by regularity of pay, but who were generally in a state of mutiny for want of it. The whole body of the *pospolite*, the volunteers, the *valets d'armée*, and a large body of the mercenaries and national troops, served on horseback. The heavy cavalry, in particular, constituted the strength of the armies ; there were to be found united, riches, splendour, and number. They were divided into cuirassiers and hussars ; the former clothed in steel, man and horse bearing casque and cuirass, lance and sabre, bow and carbine ; the latter defended only by a twisted hauberk, which descended from the head, over the shoulders and breast, and armed with a sabre and pistol. Both were distinguished by the splendour of their dress and equipage, and the number and costly array of their mounted servants, accoutred in the most bizarre manner, with huge black plumes, and skins of bears and other wild beasts. It was the pride of this body that they were composed of men, all measured, as they expressed it, by the same standard ; that is, equally acknowledging no superior but their God, and equally destined, perhaps, to step one day into the

28.

Nature of
the national
force.

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throne of the Piasts and the Jagellons. They boasted that, "if the heaven itself were to fall, they would support it on the point of their lances." The hussars and cuirassiers were denominated *towarzisz*—that is, companions: they called each other by that name, and they were designated in the same way by the sovereign, whose chief boast was to be *primus inter pares*, the first among equals. But all these forces were in general in the most miserable state of destitution. The regular army, almost always without pay, was generally without discipline, and totally destitute of every kind of equipment: the castles and fortified towns had no other defences but walls, which age had almost everywhere reduced to ruins; the arsenals were in general empty. All those great establishments, which in other states bespeak the constant vigilance of government, were wanting. Poland had no other resources but these armed confederations, which, nevertheless, frequently saved the republic in the midst of the greatest perils; and more than once, through the unconquerable valour of the nobles, preserved the liberties of Europe from the Ottoman power.¹

¹ Rulh. i. 33,
50. Salv. i.
128, 129.

29.
Their long
and desperate
wars with the
Asiatic
tribes.

The physical situation of the Poles was singularly ill calculated to arrest the course of these disorders. Placed on the frontiers of European civilisation; removed from the sea, or any commercial intercourse with other states, without either ranges of mountains or fortified towns, to serve as asylums in case of defeat, they had to maintain a constant and perilous war with the hordes who threatened Christendom from the deserts of Asia. Their history is one uninterrupted series of mortal conflicts with the Muscovites, the Tartars, and the Turks, in the course of which they were repeatedly brought to the brink of ruin, and saved only by those desperate efforts which characterise the Polish history above that of all other states in modern times. The frequency and murderous nature of these dreadful wars blighted every attempt at rural industry, and chained the nation, even in recent times, to

those irregular and warlike habits which had been abandoned, centuries before, in all the other monarchies of Europe. Religious fury added grievously to these disastrous struggles, and the revolt of the Cossacks of the Ukraine, consequent on the schism between the Greek and the Catholic Church, brought the republic to the verge of destruction, and ultimately led to the incorporation of their vast territory with the Muscovite dominions.¹

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¹ Rulh. i. 36,
38, 64.

Weakened in this manner in these contests with their enemies, equally by their freedom as their tyranny; knowing of liberty nothing but its licentiousness, of government but its weakness; inferior to all around them, not less in numbers than in discipline, the Poles were the only warlike nation in the world to whom victory never brought either conquests or peace. Unceasing combats with the Germans, the Hungarians, the Muscovites, the pirates of the north, all of whom regarded the republic as a common prey, fill their annals. They successively saw Bohemia, Mecklenburg, Moravia, Brandenburg, Pomerania, Silesia, the Ukraine, and Red Russia, melt away from their once mighty dominion, without ever once thinking of establishing such a steady government as might secure the various parts of their vast possessions, or restraining those ruinous democratic privileges to which the whole public disasters were owing. Their character closely resembled that of the native Celts in western Europe. To repel civilisation, and retain unchanged the passions and habits of savage life, was their constant object. They succeeded in their wishes, and thence their ruin. Incapable of foresight, they saw their neighbours daily increasing in strength, without making any effort to keep pace with their progress. Blindly attached to their customs, they adhered to them with fatal pertinacity, despite of all the lessons of experience, and were thus destined to realise to the uttermost the bitter fruits of a pitiless aristocracy and a senseless equality.²

^{30.}
And with
their Euro-
pean neigh-
bours.

² Salv. i. 74.

Centuries before their partition at the close of the

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31.

Their weakness early suggested the idea of dismemberment to the adjoining states.

eighteenth century, the distracted state and experienced weakness of the Polish republic had suggested to the neighbouring powers the project of dividing its territory. Authentic documents demonstrate that this design was seriously entertained in the time of Louis XIV., and postponed only in consequence of the vast reputation and heroic character of John Sobieski, which prolonged the existence of the republic for a hundred years, and threw a ray of glory over its declining fortunes. Of the powers whose unworthy alliance effected the destruction of the oldest republic in the world, all had arisen out of its ruins, or been spared by its arms. Prussia, once a province of Poland, had grown out of the spoils of its ancient ruler;¹ Austria owed to the intervention of a Polish hero its deliverance from the sword of the Mussulman; and long before the French eagles approached the Kremlin, a Polish army had conquered Moscow; and the Sarmatians had placed a son of their own king on the throne of Russia.²

¹ Salv. i. 136, and ii. 236. Rulh. 259, 260.

² Karamsin, Hist. de Russie, v. 101.

32.
Noble exploits of John Sobieski.

Nothing can so strongly demonstrate the wonderful power of democracy as a spring, and its desolating effects when not compressed by a firm regulator, as the history of John Sobieski. The force which this illustrious champion of Christendom could bring into the field to defend his country from Mahommedan invasion, seldom amounted to fifteen thousand men; and when, previous to the battle of Kotzim, he found himself, by an extraordinary effort, at the head of forty thousand, of whom hardly one-half were well disciplined, the unusual spectacle inspired him with such confidence, that he hesitated not to attack eighty thousand Turkish veterans, strongly intrenched, and gained the greatest victory which had been achieved by the Christian arms since the battle of Ascalon. The troops which he led to the deliverance of Vienna were no more than eighteen thousand native Poles, and the combined Christian army only numbered seventy thousand combatants; yet with this force he

routed three hundred thousand Turkish soldiers ; and broke the Mussulman power so effectually, that, for the first time for three hundred years, the crescent of Mahomet permanently receded, and from that period historians date the decline of the Ottoman empire. Yet, after these glorious triumphs, the ancient divisions of the republic paralysed its strength, and rendered unavailing its marvellous achievements. No efforts on the part of the sagacious hero could induce the impatient nobility to submit to any burdens, in order to establish a permanent force for the public safety. The defence of the frontiers was again intrusted to a few thousand undisciplined horsemen ; and the Polish nation incurred the disgrace of allowing its heroic king, the deliverer of Christendom, to be besieged for months, with fifteen thousand men, by innumerable hordes of barbarians, before the tardy *pospolite* advanced to his relief.¹

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¹ Salv. iii. 61, and ii. 137, 141, 372, 454. Rulh. i. 56.

Sobieski, worn out with his ineffectual endeavours to create a regular government, or establish a permanent force for the protection of Poland, clearly foresaw the future fate of the republic. Before his accession to the throne, he had united with the primate and sixteen hundred of its principal citizens to overturn the phantom of equality with which they were perpetually opposed, and, to use his own words, "Rescue the republic from the insane tyranny of a plebeian noblesse." His reign was one incessant struggle with the principles of anarchy which were implanted in his dominions : and he at length sank under the experienced impossibility of remedying them. The aged hero, when drawing near the grave, the approach to which was accelerated by the ingratitude and dissensions of his subjects during his later years, expressed himself to the senate in these memorable and prophetic terms :— "He was well acquainted with the griefs of the soul who declared, that small distresses love to declare themselves, but great are silent. The world will be mute with amazement at the contemplation of us and our councils.

33.
His prophetic anticipation of the partition of Poland from its democratic divisions.

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Nature herself will be astonished! That beneficent parent has gifted every living creature with the instinct of self-preservation, and given the most inconsiderable animals arms for their defence : we alone in the universe turn ours against ourselves. That instinct is taken from us, not by any resistless force, not by any inevitable destiny, but by a voluntary insanity, by our own passions, by the desire of mutual destruction. Alas! what will one day be the mournful surprise of posterity to find, that from the summit of glory, from the period when the Polish name filled the universe, our country has fallen into ruins, and fallen, alas, for ever! I have been able to gain for you victories ; but I feel myself unable to save you from yourselves. Nothing remains to be done but to place in the hands, not of destiny, for I am a Christian, but of a powerful and beneficent Deity, the fate of my beloved country. Believe me, the eloquence of your tribunes, instead of being turned against the throne, would be better directed against those who, by their disorders, are bringing down upon our country the cry of the prophet, which I, alas! hear too clearly rolling over our heads — ‘yet forty years, and Nineveh will be no more.’”¹

¹ Letter, Sobieski to Louis XIV. July 14, 1672. Rulh. i. 53. Salv. iii. 375, 377.

34.
With him the Polish power was extinguished.

The anticipation of the hero was not exactly accomplished ; his own glorious deeds, despite the insanity of his subjects, prolonged the existence of Poland for nearly a hundred years. But succeeding events proved every day more clearly the truth of his prediction. The conquest of the frontier town of Kaminieck from the Turks, achieved by the terror of his name after he was no more, was the last triumph of the republic. He was also its last national sovereign, and the last who possessed any estimation in the world. With him disappeared both its power and its ascendancy among other nations. From that period, successive foreign armies invaded its provinces, and invaded it never to recede. The different factions in the state, steeped in the bitterness of party strife, and exhausted by their efforts for mutual destruc-

tion, sought in the support of strangers the means of wreaking their vengeance on each other. Foreign ambition gladly responded to the call; and, under the pretence of terminating its distractions, armed one half of the country against the other. The adjoining powers soon became omnipotent in so divided a community: all hastened to place themselves under the banners of some neighbouring sovereign. By turns the Saxons, Swedes, Muscovites, Imperialists, and Prussians, ruled its destinies: Poland was no more; according to his own prophecy, it descended into the tomb with the greatest of its sons.¹

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¹ Salv. iii.
455.

Never did a people exhibit a more extraordinary spectacle than the Poles after this period. Two factions were for ever at war; both had, to espouse and defend their interests, an army; but it was a foreign army, a conquering army, an army conquering without a combat. The inferior noblesse introduced the Saxons; the greater called in the Swedes. From the day in which Sobieski closed his eyes, strangers never ceased to reign in Poland; its national forces were continually diminishing, and at length totally disappeared. The reason is, that a nation without subjects is speedily exhausted; the republic, composed only of two hundred thousand citizens, at length had no more blood to shed, even in civil war. No encounters thereafter took place but between the Swedish, German, or Russian forces; their struggles resembled more the judicial combat of the feudal ages than the contests of powerful nations. The factions of the republic, united round these foreign banners, exchanged notes and summonses like belligerent powers. By degrees blood ceased to flow; in these internal divisions gold was found more effectual than the sword; and, to the disgrace of Poland, its later years sank under the debasement of foreign corruption.²

^{35.}
Excessive
democratic
strife after
his death.² Salv. iii.
479. Rulh.
i. 62, 63.

Pursued to the grave by the phantom of equality, the dissensions of Poland became more violent as it approached its dissolution. The *liberum veto* was more

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36.

Increasing
weakness
and anar-
chy of the
republic.

frequently exercised every year ; it was no longer produced by the vehemence of domestic strife, but by the influence of external corruption. That single word plunged the republic, as if by enchantment, into a lethargic sleep, and every time it was pronounced, it fell for two years into a state of absolute inanition. Faction even went so far as to dissolve the diets in their first sittings, and render their convocation a mere vain formality. All the branches of the government immediately ceased to be under any control ; the treasury, the army, the civil authority, released from all superintendence, fell into a state of anarchy. Nothing similar to this ever occurred with any other people. The legislative power succeeded in destroying itself ; and no other power ever ventured to supply its place. The executive, parcelled out into many independent and hostile divisions, was incapable of effecting such a usurpation ; and if it had, the right of the nation to assemble in open confederation would immediately have rendered it nugatory. The prophecy of Montesquieu, as to the future destruction of the British constitution, has been accomplished in Poland ; it fell when the legislative became more corrupt than the executive.¹

37.
Which made
its partition
in 1772 easy.

When the adjoining states of Russia and Austria, therefore, effected the first partition of Poland in 1792, they did not require to conquer a kingdom, but only to take each a share of a state which had fallen to pieces. The election of Stanislaus Poniatowski, in 1764, to the throne of Poland, took place literally under the buckler ; but it was not under the buckler of its own nobles, but of the Muscovite, the Cossack, and the Tartar, who overshadowed the plain of Volo with their arms—last and fatal consequence of centuries of anarchy ! In vain did the Poles, taught at length by woful experience, attempt, by the advice of Czartoriski, to abandon the fatal privilege of the *liberum veto* ; the despots of Russia and Prussia declared that they took the liberties of Poland,

and that important right in particular, under their peculiar protection, and perpetuated a privilege which insured their conquest of the kingdom. The inferior noblesse had the madness to invoke the aid of the Empress Catherine, to maintain their ancient privileges against what they called the tyranny of the aristocracy; and Poland, invaded by the two most powerful monarchies of Europe, was deprived of the aid of the greater part of its own subjects. The higher nobility, the clergy, the real patriots, made generous efforts, but all in vain; the insane people, regardless of everything but the maintenance of their powers, refused to second them, and one half of Poland was lost in the struggle.¹

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The terrible lesson was not received in vain. Taught by the dismemberment of the territory, what remained of Poland strove to amend its institutions: the *liberum veto* was abandoned, and the nobles themselves, taking the lead in the work of reformation, made a voluntary surrender of their privileges for the public good. The example of the French Revolution had penetrated the wilds of Sarmatia, and a new era seemed to open upon the world from its example. On the 3d May 1791, a constitution founded upon the hereditary descent of the throne, the abolition of the *liberum veto*, religious toleration, the emancipation of the bourgeois, and the progressive enfranchisement of the serfs, was proclaimed at Warsaw, amidst tears of joy from a people who hoped that they had at last reached a termination to their long misfortunes. The Polish reform was so different from the French, that it would seem as if it was expressly set down by Providence to afford a contrast to that bloody convulsion, and deprive the partitioning powers of a shadow even of justice in the mournful catastrophe which followed. "In contemplating that change," says Mr Burke, "humanity has everything to rejoice and glory in—nothing to be ashamed of, nothing to suffer. So far as it has gone, it is probably the most pure public good

38.
When too late, they abandon their ruinous democratic privileges. Difference of the Polish and French reforms.

¹ Salv. i. 498.

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ever yet conferred on mankind. Anarchy and servitude were at once removed; a throne strengthened for the protection of the people, without trenching on their liberties; foreign cabal abolished, by changing the crown from elective to hereditary; a reigning king, from a heroic love to his country, exerted himself in favour of a family of strangers, as if it had been his own. Ten millions of men were placed in a way to be freed gradually, and therefore to themselves safely, not from civil or political chains, which, bad as they are, only fetter the mind, but from substantial personal bondage. Inhabitants of cities, before without privileges, were placed in the consideration which belongs to that improved and connecting situation of social life. One of the most numerous, proud, and fierce bodies of nobility in the world, was arranged only in the foremost rank of free citizens. All, from the king to the labourer, were improved in their condition; everything was kept in its place and order, but in that place and order everything was bettered. Not one drop of blood was spilled, no treachery, no outrage; no slander, more cruel than the sword; no studied insults on religion, morals, or manners; no spoil or confiscation, no citizen beggared, none imprisoned, none exiled; but the whole was effected with a policy, a discretion, a unanimity, and secresy, such as have never before been known on any occasion.”¹ But it was too late. The powers which environed Poland were too strong, the weakness entailed on it by its long anarchy was too great, to admit of its being restored to the rank of an independent power. Like many men who discover the error of their ways when on the verge of the grave, the Poles had continued the passions of their youth down to the period when amendment is impossible, and repentance fruitless. Had they abandoned their democratic contentions in the days of Sobieski, the state might have recovered its ascendancy; in the days of Catherine it was no longer practicable.²

¹ Burke, Appeal to Old Whigs — Works, vi. 244, 245.

² Salv. iii. 500, 501.

The last struggles of the Poles, like all their preceding ones, originated in their own divisions. The partisans of the ancient anarchy revolted against the new and more stable constitution which they had recently received ; they took up arms at Targowice, and invoked the aid of the Empress Catherine to restore the disorder from which they had lost and she had gained so much. A second dismemberment speedily ensued, and, in the distracted state of the country, it was effected without opposition. Prussia and Russia took upon themselves alone the execution of this partition, and the combined troops were in the first instance quietly cantoned in the provinces which they had seized. The Russian general Ingelstroem was stationed at Warsaw, and occupied all the inconsiderable portion of the republic still left to Stanislaus. Soltikoff had under his orders a powerful corps in Volhynia and Podolia. Suwarroff, with a large corps, was placed at Cherson, to overawe both the Turks and the southern provinces : while a large Prussian corps was ready to support Ingelstroem, and had already seized upon the northern parts of the country. Thus Poland, divided and paralysed, without fortified towns, mountains, or defensible positions, was overrun by the armies of two of the most powerful military monarchies in Europe.¹

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39.

Commence-
ment of
their last
struggle.
October 14,
1793.¹ Jom. vi.
257, 258.

Salv. iii. 501

There is a certain degree of calamity which overwhelms the courage ; but there is another, which, by reducing men to desperation, sometimes leads to the greatest and most glorious enterprises. To this latter state the Poles were now reduced. Abandoned by all the world, distracted with internal divisions, destitute alike of fortresses and resources, crushed in the grasp of gigantic enemies, the patriots of that unhappy country, consulting only their own courage, resolved to make a last effort to deliver it from its enemies. In the midst of their internal convulsions, and through all the prostration of their national strength, the Poles had never lost their individual courage,

40.

The Poles
take up
arms from
despair, and
elect Kos-
ciusko as a
leader.

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¹ Salv. iii.
92. Jom.
vi. 260.

41.

Character of
Kosciusko,
who saw the
futility of
resistance.

or the ennobling feelings of civil independence. They were still the redoubtable hussars who broke the Mussulman ranks under the walls of Vienna, and carried the Polish eagles in triumph to the towers of the Kremlin ; whose national cry had so often made the Osmanlis tremble, and who had boasted in their hours of triumph, that if the heaven itself were to fall, they would support it on the points of their lances. A band of patriots at Warsaw resolved at all hazards to attempt the restoration of their independence, and they made choice of KosCIUSKO, who was then at Leipsic, to direct their efforts.^{1*}

This illustrious hero, who had received the rudiments of military education in France, had afterwards served, not without glory, in the ranks of independence in America. Uniting to Polish enthusiasm French ability, the ardent friend of liberty, and the enlightened advocate for order ; brave, loyal, and generous, he was in every way qualified to head the last struggle of the oldest republic in existence for its national independence. But a nearer approach to the scene of danger convinced him that the hour for action had not yet arrived. The passions, indeed, were awakened ; the national enthusiasm was full ; but the

* Thadeus Kosciusko was born in 1755, of a poor but noble family, and received the first elements of his education in the corps of cadets at Warsaw. There he was early distinguished by his diligence, ability, and progress in mathematical science, insomuch that he was selected as one of the four students annually chosen at that institution to travel at the expense of the state. He went abroad, accordingly, and spent several years in France, chiefly engaged in military studies ; from whence he returned in 1778, with ideas of freedom and independence unhappily far in advance of his country at that period. As war did not seem likely at that period in the north of Europe, he set sail for America, then beginning the war of independence, and was employed by Washington as his adjutant, and distinguished himself greatly in that contest beside Lafayette, Lameth, Dumas, and so many of the other ardent and enthusiastic spirits from the Old World. He returned to Europe on the termination of the war, decorated with the order of Cincinnatus, and lived in retirement till 1789, when, as King Stanislaus was adopting some steps with a view to the assertion of national independence, he was appointed Major-General by the Polish Diet. In 1791 he joined with enthusiasm in the formation of the Constitution which was proclaimed on the 5th May in that year, and in 1792 performed several brilliant actions under Poniatowsky, especially at Dubienka, which with four thousand men he defended during six hours against the assault of twelve thousand Russians. Stanislaus having been forced to make peace, he was

means of resistance were inconsiderable, and the old divisions of the republic were not so healed as to afford the prospect of the whole national strength being exerted in its defence. But the public indignation could brook no delay; several regiments stationed at Pultusk revolted, and moved towards Gallicia; and Kosciusko, albeit despairing of success, determined not to be absent in the hour of danger, hastened to Cracow, where, on the 3d March, he closed the gates, and proclaimed the insurrection.¹

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¹ Jom. vi.
263. Toul.
v. 88.

Having, by means of the regiments which had revolted, and the junction of some bodies of armed peasants—imperfectly armed indeed, but full of enthusiasm—collected a force of five thousand men, Kosciusko left Cracow, and boldly advanced into the open country. He encountered a body of three thousand Russians at Raslowice, and, after an obstinate engagement, succeeded in routing it with great slaughter. This action, inconsiderable in itself, had important consequences; the Polish peasants exchanged their scythes for the arms found on the field of battle, and the insurrection, encouraged by this first gleam of success, soon communicated itself to the adjoining

42.
He defeats
the Russians
at Raslo-
wice. War-
saw is taken
by the in-
surgents.

April 8.

obliged to yield to necessity, and retire to Leipsic, where he lived in seclusion till 1794, when, his countrymen having resolved to make a last effort to avert entire subjugation, he was solicited to take the command, and with true patriotic devotion, albeit almost despairing of success, he set out to sacrifice himself for his country. After the battle of Maccowice, in which he was made prisoner, he was taken to St Petersburg, where he was detained in confinement for two years, until the accession of Paul, when he was set at liberty, and treated by him with great generosity. He then withdrew to England, from whence he passed over to America, where he was received with the utmost distinction; and in 1798 returned to France, where he lived in retirement, refusing all offers of command from Napoleon, whose selfish designs on Poland he early divined. To gain his services, the French Emperor condescended to the baseness, in 1807, of forging his name to a proclamation to the Poles, urging them to reassert their independence—a fraud which Kosciusko exposed in 1814, when the Allies conquered France. He continued to live in retirement in Champagne till March 1814, when the Russians found him, to their great surprise, in a small town near their headquarters. He had several interviews with the Emperor Alexander, who treated him with marks of respect; but he declined all offers of employment, and at last died at Soleure in 1817, beloved alike by his friends and his enemies.—See *Biographie Universelle*, xxii. 551, 552, and *Biog. des Contemporains*, x. 148, 149.

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¹ Jom. vi.
264, 266,
269. Lac.
xii. 269, 271.
Hard. i. 472.

43.
Poles in the
Russian
army dis-
armed.

² Jom. vi.
271.

provinces. In vain Stanislaus disavowed the acts of his subjects ; the flame of independence spread with the rapidity of lightning, and soon all the freemen in Poland were in arms. Warsaw was the first great point where the flame broke out. The intelligence of the success at Raslowice was received there on the 12th April, and occasioned the most violent agitation. For some days afterwards it was evident that an explosion was at hand ; and at length, at daybreak on the morning of the 17th, the brigade of Polish guards, under the direction of their officers, attacked the governor's house and the arsenal, and was speedily joined by the populace. The Russian and Prussian troops in the neighbourhood of the capital were about seven thousand men ; and after a prolonged and obstinate contest in the streets for thirty-six hours, they were driven across the Vistula with the loss of above three thousand men in killed and prisoners, and the flag of independence was hoisted on the towers of Warsaw.¹

One of the most embarrassing circumstances in the situation of the Russians, was the presence of above sixteen thousand Poles in their ranks, who were known to sympathise strongly with these heroic efforts of their fellow-citizens. Orders were immediately despatched to Suwarroff to assemble a corps, and disarm the Polish troops scattered in Podolia, before they could unite in any common measures for their defence. By the energy and activity of this great commander, the Poles were disarmed, brigade after brigade, and above twelve thousand men reduced to a state of inaction without much difficulty—a most important operation, not only by destroying the nucleus of a powerful army, but by stifling the commencement of the insurrection in Volhynia and Podolia. How different might have been the fate of Poland and Europe had they been enabled to join the ranks of their countrymen!²

Kosciusko and his countrymen did everything that courage or energy could suggest to put on foot a formid-

able force to resist their adversaries ; a provisional government was established, and in a short time forty thousand men were raised. But this force, though highly honourable to the patriotism of the Poles, was inconsiderable when compared with the vast armies which Russia and Prussia could bring up for their subjugation. Small as the army was, its maintenance was too great an effort for the resources of the kingdom, which, torn by intestine faction, without commerce, harbours, or manufactures, having no national credit, and no industrious class of citizens but the Jews, now felt the fatal effects of its long career of democratic anarchy. The population of the country, composed entirely of unruly gentlemen and ignorant serfs, was totally unable at that time to furnish those numerous supplies of intelligent officers which are requisite for the formation of an efficient military force ; while the nobility, however formidable on horseback in the Hungarian or Turkish wars, were less to be relied on in a contest with regular forces, where infantry and artillery constituted the great strength of the army, and courage was unavailing without the aid of science and military discipline.¹

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44.

Great exertions of Kosciusko and his countrymen

¹ Jom. vi. 273.

The central position of Poland, in the midst of its enemies, would have afforded great military advantages, had its inhabitants possessed a force capable of turning it to account—that is, if they had had, like Frederick the Great in the Seven Years' War, a hundred and fifty thousand regular troops, which the population of the country could easily have maintained, and a few well-fortified towns to arrest the enemy in one quarter, while the bulk of the national force was precipitated upon them in another. The glorious stand made by the nation in 1831, with only thirty thousand regular soldiers at the commencement of the insurrection, and no fortifications but those of Warsaw and Modlin, proves what immense advantages this central position affords, and what opportunities it offers to military genius like that of SKRYNECKI, to inflict

45.

Want of a large regular force proved fatal to them.

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the most severe wounds even on a superior and well-conducted antagonist. But all these advantages were wanting to Kosciusko ; and it augments our admiration of his talents, and of the heroism of his countrymen, that, with such inconsiderable means, they made so honourable a stand for their national independence.

46.
Russians
and Prus-
sians move
against
Warsaw,
and violent
tumults
there.

No sooner was the King of Prussia informed of the revolution at Warsaw, than he moved forward at the head of thirty thousand men to besiege that city : while Suwarroff, with forty thousand veterans, was preparing to enter the south-eastern parts of the kingdom. Aware of the necessity of striking a blow before the enemy's forces were united, Kosciusko advanced with twelve thousand men to attack the Russian general Denisoff ; but, upon approaching his corps, he discovered that it had united to the army commanded by the king in person. Unable to face such superior forces, he immediately retired, but was attacked next morning at daybreak near Sekoczyre by the allies, and after a gallant resistance his army was routed, and Cracow fell into the hands of the conquerors. This check was the more severely felt, as, about the same time, General Zayonscheck was defeated at Chelne, and obliged to recross the Vistula, leaving the whole country on the right bank of that river in the hands of the Russians. These disasters produced a great impression at Warsaw : the people as usual ascribed them to treachery, and insisted that the leaders should be brought to punishment ; and although the chiefs escaped, several persons in an inferior situation were arrested and thrown into prison. Apprehensive of some subterfuge, if the accused were regularly brought to trial, the burghers assembled in tumultuous bodies, forced the prisons, erected scaffolds in the streets, and, after the manner of the assassins of September 2d, put above twelve persons to death with their own hands. These excesses affected with the most profound grief the pure heart of Kosciusko ; he flew to the capital, restored order, and delivered over to punish-

ment the leaders of the revolt. But the resources of the country were evidently unequal to the struggle ; the paper money, which had been issued in their extremity, was at a frightful discount ; and the sacrifices required of the nation were the more severely felt, that hardly a hope of ultimate success remained.¹

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¹ Lac. xii.
272. Jom.
vi. 274, 279.

The combined Russian and Prussian armies, about thirty-five thousand strong, now advanced against the capital, where Kosciusko occupied an intrenched camp with twenty-five thousand men. During the whole of July and August, the besiegers were engaged in fruitless attempts to drive the Poles into the city ; and at length a great convoy, with artillery and stores for a regular siege, which was ascending the Vistula, having been captured by a gentleman named Minewsky, at the head of a body of peasants, the King of Prussia raised the siege, leaving a portion of his sick and stores in the hands of the patriots. After this success, the insurrection spread immensely, and the Poles mustered nearly eighty thousand men under arms. But they were scattered over too extensive a line of country in order to make head against their numerous enemies—a policy tempting by the prospect it holds forth of exciting an extensive insurrection, but ruinous in the end, by exposing the patriotic forces to the risk of being beaten in detail. Scarcely had the Poles recovered from their intoxication at the raising of the siege of Warsaw, when intelligence was received of the defeat of Sizakowsky, who commanded a corps of ten thousand men beyond the Bug, by the Russian grand army under SUWARROFF.*

^{47.} The invaders are compelled to raise the siege. Suwarroff defeats a body of Poles.

Sept. 17. This celebrated general, to whom the principal conduct of the war was now committed, followed up his successes with the utmost vigour. The retreating column was again assailed on the 19th by the victorious Russians, and, after a glorious resistance, driven into the woods between Janoff and Biala, with the loss of four thousand men and twenty-eight pieces of cannon.² Scarcely three

Sept. 19.
² Hard. i.
474, 480.
Toul. 589.
Jom. vi. 283,
287.

* See a biography of SUWARROFF—*Infra*, chap. XXVII. § 55.

CHAP.
XVII.1794.
48.Kosciusko
is routed
and made
prisoner at
Maccowice.

thousand Poles, with Sizakowsky at their head, escaped into Siedlice.

Oct. 4.

Upon receiving the accounts of this disaster, Kosciusko resolved, by drawing together all his detachments, to fall upon Fersen before he joined Suwarroff, and the other corps which were advancing against the capital. With this view he ordered General Poninsky to join him, and marched with all his disposable forces to attack the Russian general, who was stationed at Maccowice ; but fortune on this occasion cruelly deceived the Poles. Arrived in presence of Fersen, he found that Poninsky had not yet arrived ; and the Russian commander, overjoyed at this circumstance, resolved immediately to attack him. In vain Kosciusko despatched courier after courier to Poninsky to advance to his relief. The first was intercepted by the Cossacks, and the second did not reach that leader in time to enable him to take a decisive part in the approaching combat. Nevertheless the Polish commander, aware of the danger of retreating with inexperienced troops in presence of a disciplined and superior enemy, determined to give battle on the following day, and drew up his little army with as much skill as the circumstances would admit. The forces on the opposite sides in this action, which decided the fate of Poland, were nearly equal in point of numbers ; but the advantages of discipline and equipment were decisively on the side of the Russians. Kosciusko commanded about ten thousand men, a great part of whom were recently raised, and imperfectly disciplined ; while Fersen was at the head of twelve thousand veterans, including a most formidable body of cavalry. Nevertheless, the Poles in the centre and right wing made a glorious defence ; but the left, which Poninsky should have supported, having been overwhelmed by the cavalry under Denisoff, the whole army was, after a severe struggle, thrown into confusion. Kosciusko, Sizakowsky, and other gallant chiefs, in vain made the most heroic efforts to rally the broken troops.¹ They were wounded, struck down,

¹ Toul. v. 89.
Lac. xii. 274.
Jom. vi. 291.
Biog. Univ.
xxii. 551
(Kosciusko).

and made prisoners by the Cossacks, who inundated the field of battle; while the remains of the army, now reduced to seven thousand five hundred men, fell back in confusion towards Warsaw.

After the fall of Kosciusko, who sustained in his single person the fortunes of the republic, nothing but a series of disasters overtook the Poles. The Austrians, taking advantage of the general confusion, entered Galicia, and occupied the palatinates of Lublin and Sandomir; while Suwarroff, pressing forward towards the capital, defeated Mokronowsky, who, at the head of twelve thousand men, strove to retard the advance of that redoubtable commander. In vain the Poles made the utmost efforts; they were routed with the loss of four thousand men; and the patriots, though now despairing of success, resolved to sell their lives dearly, and shut themselves up in Warsaw, to await the approach of the conqueror. Suwarroff was soon at the gates of Praga, the eastern suburb of that capital, where twenty-six thousand men, and one hundred pieces of cannon, defended the bridge of the Vistula and the approach to the capital. To assault such a position with forces hardly superior was evidently a hazardous enterprise; but, the approach of winter rendering it indispensable that if anything was done at all, it should be immediately attempted, Suwarroff, who was habituated to successful assaults in the Turkish wars, resolved to storm the city. On the 2d November, the Russians made their appearance before the glacis of Praga, and Suwarroff, having in great haste completed three powerful batteries, and breached the defences with imposing celerity, made his dispositions for a general assault on the following day.¹

CHAP.
XVII.

1794.

49.
The patriots
shut them-
selves up in
Warsaw.

¹ Jom. vi.
292, 295.
Toel. v. 89.

The conquerors of Ismail advanced to the attack in the same order which they had adopted on the memorable storm of that fortress. Seven columns at daybreak approached the ramparts, rapidly filled up the ditches with their fascines, broke down the defences, and, pouring into the intrenched camp, carried destruction into the ranks

CHAP.
XVII.1794.
50.

Storming of
Praga and
Warsaw by
Suwarroff.
Atrocious
massacre by
the Rus-
sians.
Nov. 4.

of the Poles. In vain the defenders did their utmost to resist the torrent. The wooden houses of Praga speedily took fire, and, amidst the shouts of the victors and the cries of the inhabitants, the Polish battalions were borne backward to the edge of the Vistula. The multitude of fugitives speedily broke down the bridges; and the citizens of Warsaw beheld, with unavailing anguish, their defenders on the other side perishing in the flames, or by the sword of the conquerors. Ten thousand soldiers fell on the spot, nine thousand were made prisoners, and above twelve thousand citizens, of every age and sex, were put to the sword—a dreadful instance of carnage, which has left a lasting stain on the name of Suwarroff, and which Russia expiated in the conflagration of Moscow. The tragedy was at an end. Warsaw capitulated two days afterwards; the detached parties of the patriots melted away, and Poland was no more. On the 6th November, Suwarroff made his triumphant entry into the blood-stained capital. King Stanislaus was sent into Russia, where he ended his days in captivity, and the final partition of the monarchy was effected.¹

¹ Jom. vi.
297, 299.
Toul. v. 89,
91. Lac.
xii. 275.

51.
Great sen-
sation pro-
duced in
Europe by
the fall of
Poland.

Such was the termination of the oldest republic in existence,—such the first instance of the destruction of a member of the European family by its ambitious rivals. As such, it excited a profound sensation in Europe. The folly of preceding ages, the long period of wasting anarchy, the madness of democratic ambition, the irretrievable defects of the Sarmatian constitution, were forgotten. Poland was remembered only as the bulwark of Christendom against the Ottomans; she appeared only as the succouring angel under John Sobieski. To behold a people so ancient, so gallant, whose deeds were associated with such heart-stirring recollections, fall a victim to Imperial ingratitude, Prussian cupidity, and Muscovite ambition, was a spectacle which naturally excited the utmost indignation. The bloody march of the French Revolution, the disasters consequent on domestic dissension, were

forgotten, and the Christian world was penetrated with a grief akin to that felt by all civilised nations at the fall of Jerusalem. The poet has celebrated these events in the immortal lines—

CHAP.
XVII.

1794.

“ Oh ! bloodiest picture in the book of time,
Sarmatia fell, unwept, without a crime ;
Found not a generous friend, a pitying foe,
Strength in her arms, nor mercy in her woe !
Dropp'd from her nerveless grasp the shatter'd spear,
Closed her bright eye, and curb'd her high career ;—
Hope, for a season, bade the world farewell,
And freedom shriek'd—as Kosciuszko fell !”

But the truth of history must dispel the illusion, and unfold in the fall of Poland the natural consequence of its national delinquencies. Sarmatia neither fell unwept nor without a crime ; she fell the victim of her own dissensions—of the chimera of equality insanely pursued, and the rigour of aristocracy unceasingly maintained ; of extravagant jealousy of every superior, and merciless oppression of every inferior rank. The eldest-born of the European family was the first to perish, because she had thwarted all the ends of the social union ; because she united the turbulence of democratic to the exclusiveness of aristocratic societies ; because she exhibited the vacillation of a republic without its energy, and the oppression of a monarchy without its stability. Such a system neither could nor ought to be maintained. The internal feuds of Poland were more fatal to human happiness than the despotism of Russia, and the growth of improvement among its people was slower than among the ryots of Hindostan.

52.
It fell a
victim to
democratic
madness and
oppression.

To any one who has either studied in history, or experienced in real life, the practical working of the principle of self-government among mankind, in situations where democratic equality is really established, the destruction of Poland will appear far from surprising. In truth, the only wonderful thing is, that her people so long succeeded in maintaining their independence. It is the fretting against control, the “ ignorant impatience of taxation ” in man-

53.
Real cause
of the ruin
of Poland.

CHAP.
XVII.

1794.

¹ Sidney
Smith.

kind, when practically intrusted with self-government, which was the real cause of the calamity. No lessons of experience however severe, no calls of patriotism however urgent, no warnings of wisdom however emphatic, could induce its plebeian noblesse to submit to any present burden to avert future disaster. Like the Americans at this time, who refuse in many States, at all hazards to their public credit, to tax themselves to defray the interest of their State's debt, they preferred "any load of infamy however great, to any burden of taxation however light."¹ So strong is this disinclination to submit to present burdens to prevent future evil, among men in all ages and countries, that it may fairly be considered as insurmountable; and therefore any society in which supreme power is really vested in the people, bears in itself the seeds of early ruin. Democratic bodies often exhibit extraordinary energy, if they can derive their resources from foreign plunder or domestic confiscation; but they will never, except in the last extremity, burden themselves. Real self-taxation is in truth a delusive theory: where it is attempted to be put in practice it invariably fails; what was so long mistaken for it was the taxing of one class by another class—of the many by the few. These are unpalatable truths—but they are not the less truths; nor is it less on that account the duty of the historian to state them. If any one doubts their accuracy, let him contemplate the abandonment of the Sinking Fund, in consequence of the enormous and unnecessary reduction of indirect taxation since popular influence began to predominate in Great Britain, and the recent repudiation of the States' debt by a large part of the American people.

54.
Striking
contrast
afforded by
the steady
growth of
Russia.

In this respect the history of Muscovy presents a striking and instructive contrast to that of Poland. Commencing originally with a smaller territory, yet further removed from the light of civilisation—cut off in a manner from the intelligence of the globe, decidedly inferior to its heroic rival in its earlier contests—the growth of Russia

has been as steady as the decline of Poland. The Polish republic fell at length beneath a power which it had repeatedly vanquished, whose capital it had conquered ; and its name was erased from the list of nations at the very time that its despotic rival had attained the zenith of power and glory. These facts throw a great and important light on the causes of early civilisation, and the form of government adapted to a barbarous age. There cannot in such a state be so great a misfortune as a weak, there cannot be so great a blessing as a powerful government. No oppression is so severe as that which is there inflicted by the members of the same state on each other ; no anarchy so irremediable as that which originates in the violence of their own passions. To restrain the fury, and coerce the dissensions of its subjects, is the first duty of government in such periods ; in its inability to discharge this duty is to be found the real cause of the weakness of a democratic—in the rude but effective performance of it, the true secret of the strength of a despotic state.

Such, however, are the ennobling effects of the spirit of freedom, even in its wildest form, that the remnant of the Polish nation, albeit bereft of a country by their own insanity, have by their deeds commanded the respect, and by their sorrows obtained the sympathy of the world. The remains of Kosciusko's bands, disdaining to live under Muscovite oppression, sought and found an asylum in the armies of France ; they served with distinction both in Italy and Spain, and awakened by their bravery that sympathy which, with other and more selfish motives, brought the conqueror of Europe to the walls of the Kremlin. Like the remains of a noble mind borne down by suffering, they have exhibited flashes of greatness even in the extremity of disaster ; and while wandering without a home, from which their own madness or that of their fathers had banished them, obtained a respect to which their conquerors were often strangers at the summit of their glory. Such is the effect even of the misdirected

55.
Gallant
spirit of the
exiled Polish
bands.

CHAP.
XVII.

1794.

spirit of freedom ; it dignifies and hallows all that it inspires, and, even amidst the ruins which it has occasioned, exalts the human soul !

56.
Comparison
of Polish
with Eng-
lish history.

The history of England has illustrated the beneficial effects which have resulted to its character and institutions from the Norman Conquest. In the severe suffering which followed that great event, in the anguish of generations, in the forcible intermixture of the races of the victor and vanquished, were laid the deep and firm foundations of English freedom. In the checkered and disastrous history of Poland may be traced the consequences of an opposite, and, at first sight, more fortunate destiny—of national independence uninterruptedly maintained, and purity of race unceasingly preserved. The first, in the school of early adversity, were taught the habits and learned the wisdom necessary for the guidance of maturer years ; the second, like the spoiled child whose wishes had never been coerced, nor its passions restrained, at last acquired on the brink of the grave, prematurely induced by excessive indulgence, that experience which should have been gained in earlier years. It is through this terrible but necessary ordeal that Poland is now passing ; and the experience of ages would indeed be lost, if we did not discern in its present suffering the discipline necessary for future happiness, and, in the extremity of temporary disaster, the severe training for ultimate improvement.

57.
Just retri-
bution on
the parti-
tioning
powers.

The partition of Poland, and scandalous conduct of the states who reaped the fruit of injustice in its fall, has been the frequent subject of just indignation and eloquent complaint from the European historians ; but the connection between that calamitous event and the subsequent disasters of the partitioning powers, has not hitherto met with due attention. Yet nothing can be clearer than that it was this iniquitous measure which brought all the misfortunes that followed upon the European monarchies—that it was it which opened the gates of Germany to French ambition, and brought Napoleon with his terrible

legions to Vienna, Berlin, and the Kremlin. The more the campaigns of 1793 and 1794 are studied, the more clearly does it appear that it was the prospect of obtaining a share in the partition of Poland which paralysed the allied arms, which intercepted or turned aside the legions which might have overthrown the Jacobin rule, and created that jealousy and division amongst their rulers, which, more even than the energy of the Republicans, contributed to the uniform and astonishing success of the latter. Had the redoubtable bands of Catherine been added to the armies of Prussia in the plains of Champagne in 1792, or to those of Austria and Great Britain in the fields of Flanders in 1793, not a doubt can remain that the revolutionary party would have been overcome, and a constitutional monarchy established in France, with the entire concurrence of three-fourths of all the respectable classes in the kingdom, and to the infinite present and future blessing of its whole inhabitants. Even in 1794, by a cordial co-operation of the Prussian and Austrian forces after the fall of Landrecies, the whole barrier fortresses erected by the genius of Vauban might have been captured, and the Revolution, thrown back upon its own resources, been permanently prevented from proving dangerous to the liberties of Europe. What, then, paralysed the allied armies in the midst of such a career of success, and caused the campaign to close under circumstances of such general disaster? The prospect of partitioning Poland, which first retained the Prussian battalions, during the crisis of the campaign, in sullen inactivity on the Rhine, and then led to the precipitate and indignant abandonment of Flanders by the Austrian forces.

The subsequent fate of the partitioning powers is a striking instance of that moral retribution which, sooner or later, in nations, as well as individuals, attends a

58.
Their subsequent punishment.

flagrant act of injustice. To effect the destruction of Poland, Prussia paralysed her armies on the Rhine, and threw on Austria and Britain the whole weight of the

CHAP.
XVII.

1794.

contest with Republican France. She thereby permitted the growth of its military power, and the battle of Jena, the Treaty of Tilsit, and six years of bondage, were the consequence. Suwarroff entered Warsaw when its spires were yet gleaming with the fires of Praga, and when the Vistula ran red with Polish blood; and, before twenty years had expired, the Poles revenged on the Moskwa that inhuman massacre, and the sack of Warsaw was forgotten in the conflagration of Moscow. Austria withdrew from Flanders to join in the deed of iniquity, and secure in Galicia the fruits of injustice; and twice did the French guards in consequence pass in triumph through the walls of Vienna. The connection between this great and guilty act and the subsequent disasters of the spoliating powers, therefore, is direct and evident; and history would be worse than useless if it did not signalise that memorable instance of just retribution for the eternal warning and instruction of mankind. Already has been realised, in part at least, the anticipation of the poet:—

“ Yes ! thy proud lords, unpitied land ! shall see
That man hath yet a soul, and dare be free !
A little while, along thy saddening plains,
The starless night of desolation reigns :
Truth shall restore the light by nature given,
And, like Prometheus, bring the fire of heaven.
Prone to the dust Oppression shall be hurl'd,
Her name, her nature, wither'd from the world ! ” *

* *Pleasures of Hope.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

CAMPAIGN OF 1795.

THE great success which in every quarter had signalled the conclusion of the campaign of 1794, led, early in the following year, to the dissolution of the confederacy against the French Republic. The conquest of Holland determined the wavering policy of Prussia. Early in January conferences were publicly opened at Bâle, and before the end of the month the preliminaries were signed. The public articles of this treaty bound the King of Prussia to live on friendly terms with the Republic, and not furnish succour to its enemies—to concede to France the undisturbed enjoyment of its conquests on the left bank of the Rhine, leaving the equivalent to be given to Prussia to ulterior arrangement; while, on the other hand, the French government engaged to withdraw its troops from the Prussian possessions on the right bank, and not treat as enemies the states of the Empire in which Prussia took an interest. By the secret articles, “the King of Prussia engaged not to undertake any hostile enterprise against Holland, or any country occupied by the French troops;” an indemnity was stipulated for Prussia, in the event of France extending her frontier to the Rhine; the Republic promised not to carry hostilities in the Empire beyond a fixed line; and, in case of the Rhine being permanently fixed on as the boundary of France, and including the states of Deux-Ponts,¹ the Re-

CHAP.
XVIII.

1795.

1.

Peace
between
France and
Prussia.
Jan. 22.¹ Hard. iii.
144-146.
Martens,
vi. 45.

CHAP.
XVIII.

1795.

2.

Effects of
the suc-
cesses of
France in
the preced-
ing cam-
paign.

public engaged to undertake a debt of 1,500,000 rix-dollars due to Prussia by their ruler.

There was, in truth, no present interest at variance between these powers, and the treaty contained little more of importance than a recognition of the Republic by Frederick-William. But there never was a step more ultimately ruinous taken by a nation. The conquest of Holland, which overturned the balance of power, and exposed Prussia, uncovered, to the attacks of France, should have been the signal for a sincere coalition, such as that which had coerced the ambition of Louis XIV., and subsequently overturned the power of Napoleon. What a succession of disasters would such a decided conduct in all probability have prevented! What long and disastrous wars, what a prodigious effusion of human blood, what unheard-of efforts did it require for Prussia to regain in 1813 the position which she occupied in 1795! But these events were buried in the womb of fate; no one then anticipated the coming disasters; and the Prussian ministers deemed themselves fortunate in escaping from a war in which no real interest of the monarchy seemed to be at stake. They concluded peace accordingly; they left Austria to contend single-handed with the power of France; and the battle of Jena and Treaty of Tilsit were the consequence.^{1*}

¹ Jom., vii.
6. Th. vii.
202.

* The British historian need not hesitate to express this opinion, since it is not only agreeable to that of all the German annalists, but expressly admitted by the able and candid Prussian statesman who concluded with Barthelémy, on the part of the Directory, that unhappy pacification. "The King of Prussia," says Prince Hardenberg, "tired of warlike operations, rudely awakened from his dreams on the plains of Champagne, and deeming a counter-revolution in France impossible, said to his ministers: 'Arrange matters as you like, provided you extricate me from the war with France.'" By signing the treaty of Bâle, he abandoned the House of Orange, sacrificed Holland, laid open the Empire to French invasion, and prepared the ruin of the ancient Germanic constitution. Despising the lessons of history, that prince forgot that no sooner was the independence of Holland menaced, in the end of the seventeenth century, than a league of all the sovereigns of Europe was formed to restrain the ambition of Louis XIV.; while at this time the invasion of the same country, effected under the Republican banners, led to a dissolution of the coalition of Kings against the French Revolution. From that moment every throne was stript of the magic halo which heretofore had surrounded it.

The disunited and unwieldy mass of the Germanic Empire, without altogether discontinuing military operations, pursued them in so languid a manner as was equivalent to a complete pacification. Bavaria, the Elector of Mayence, and several other powers, issued a declaration, that the states of the Empire had taken up arms only for the protection of the states adjoining Alsace, and that they had no inclination to interfere in the internal affairs of France. Spain, exhausted and dejected, awaited only the most favourable opportunity of making a separate peace, and concluding a contest from which she had already suffered so much ; while Piedmont, crushed by the weight of armaments beyond its power to support, which cost more than three times the subsidies granted by Great Britain, equally desired a conclusion to hostilities without venturing to express the wish. The conquest of Holland relieved the French government of all anxiety in that quarter, by compelling the Dutch to conclude an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the Republic. The principal conditions of that treaty were, that the United Provinces ceded Venloo and Maestricht to Belgium ; and bound themselves to aid the French with twelve ships of the line, and eighteen frigates, and one half of the troops which they had under arms.¹

CHAP.
XVIII.

1795.

3.

State of the
Empire.
Oct. 1794.
Treaty between Hol-
land and
France.

Dec. 25,
1794.

¹ *Jom. vii.*
8, 16, 18.
Th. vii. 203.
Martens.

Thus the whole weight of the war fell on Austria and

Accident merely prevented the Treaty of Bâle from being followed by a general revolution in Europe. Had Frederick-William been animated with the spirit of Frederick the Great, he would have negotiated with the olive branch in one hand and the sword in the other ; and, supporting Holland, he would even have included it in the line of his military protection. By so doing, he would have risen to the rank not only of the mediator, but the arbiter, of Europe, and been enabled to aspire to the glorious mission of balancing the dominion of the seas against Continental despotism. Whereas, the peace of Bâle, concluded in narrow views, and without any regard to the common cause, destroyed the personal character of Frederick-William, and stript the Prussian monarchy of its glorious reputation. We may add, that if, ten years afterwards, Prussia was precipitated in the abyss, it is to be imputed to its blind and obstinate adherence to the system of neutrality, which commenced with the treaty of Bâle. No one felt this more deeply, or expressed it more loudly, than the Prussian diplomatist who concluded that pacification."—PRINCE HARDENBERG'S *Memoirs*, iii. 150, 151. These able Memoirs, though written by the Count D'Allonville, were compiled from Prince Hardenberg's papers.

CHAP.
XVIII.

1795.

4.

Fresh treaty
between
Austria and
Great Bri-
tain.May 4, and
20.¹ Jom. vii.
15, 16. Parl.
Hist. xxxii.
576. Mar-
tens, vi. 65.

Great Britain. The former of these powers had suffered too much by the loss of the Low Countries to permit her to think of peace, while the disasters she had experienced had not as yet been so great as to compel her to renounce the hope of regaining them : Mr Pitt, in the latter, was fully aware of the approaching danger, and indefatigable in his efforts to revive the confederacy. He met with a worthy ally in Thugut, who directed the cabinet of Vienna. On the 4th May 1795, a treaty offensive and defensive was concluded between the two powers, by which Austria engaged to maintain 200,000 men in the field during the approaching campaign, and Great Britain to furnish a subsidy of £6,000,000 sterling. The utmost efforts were at the same time made to reinforce the Imperial armies on the Rhine.¹

5.

Efforts of
Great Bri-
tain to
maintain
the war.
Land and
sea forces,
and sup-
plies, and
treaty with
Russia.² Ann. Reg.
p. 31, 33,
45, 49.

Feb. 18.

The British government made exertions for the prosecution of the war more considerable than they had yet put forth, and seemed sensible that the national strength required to be more fully exerted now that the war approached her own shores. The naval force was augmented to one hundred thousand seamen ; one hundred and eight ships of the line were put in commission, and the land forces raised to one hundred and fifty thousand men. The expenditure of the year, exclusive of the interest of the national debt, amounted to £27,000,000, of which £18,000,000 was raised by loan, and £3,500,000 by exchequer bills. New taxes to the amount of £1,600,000 were imposed,² and, notwithstanding the most vehement debates on the conduct of the ministry, and the original expedience of the war, a large majority in parliament concurred in the necessity, now that the country was embarked in the contest, of prosecuting it with vigour. On the 18th February, an alliance offensive and defensive was concluded between Great Britain, Austria, and Russia. This important event, the first step towards the great and decisive share which the last-mentioned power ultimately took in the contest, was not, however, at first productive

of any results. The Empress Catherine, whose attention was wholly engrossed in securing the immense territories which had fallen to her by the partition of Poland, merely sent a fleet of twelve ships of the line, and eight frigates, to reinforce Admiral Duncan, who was cruising in the North Seas, to blockade the squadron recently acquired by France from the Dutch republic; but neither had any opportunity of measuring their strength with the enemy.¹

CHAP.
XVIII.

1795.

¹ New Ann.
Reg. 31, 33,
45, 49. Jom.
vii. 11, 17.
Martens, vi.
11.

A powerful and energetic party in Great Britain still declaimed against the war as unjust and unnecessary, and viewed with secret complacency the triumphs of the Republican forces. A secret belief that the cause of France was at bottom their own, led them to desire its success. It was urged in parliament, that the Revolutionary government in France being now overturned, and one professing moderation installed in its stead, the great object of the war was in fact at an end; that the continued disasters of the Allies proved the impossibility of forcing a government on that country contrary to the inclination of its inhabitants: that the confederacy was now practically dissolved, and the first opportunity should therefore be seized to conclude a contest from which no rational hopes of success any longer remained: that, if we continued fighting till the Bourbons were restored, it was impossible to see any end to the contest, or to the burden which would be imposed upon the country during its continuance: that nothing but disaster had hitherto been experienced in the struggle; and if that was the case formerly, when all Europe was arrayed against the Republic, what might now be expected when Great Britain and Austria alone were left to continue the struggle, and the French power extended from the Pyrenees to the Texel?—that every consideration of safety and expedience, therefore, recommended the speedy close of a contest, of doubtful policy in its commencement, and more than doubtful justice in its principles.²

6.
Arguments
in Great
Britain
against the
war.

² Mr Fox
and Mr Wil-
berforce's
Speeches.
New Ann.
Reg. 13, 14.
Parl. Deb.
xxxii. 231,
242.

CHAP.
XVIII.

1795.

7.

Mr Pitt's
reply.

Mr Pitt replied,—The object of the war was not to force the people of France to adopt any particular form of government, but merely to secure their neighbours from their aggression. Although there was great reason to fear that no security could be found for this till a monarchy was restored in that country, yet it was no part of the allied policy to compel its adoption : the government of the French Republic was changed in form only, and not in spirit, and was as formidable as when the war was first provoked by the declamations of the Girondists : hostilities would again be commenced as soon as the military power of their enemies was dissolved, and the Allies would then find it as difficult a matter to reassemble their forces, as the French would now find it to dissolve theirs. It is highly improbable that the Republican government will be able to induce men accustomed to war and rapine to return to the peaceful occupations of life ; and much more likely that they will find it necessary to employ them in schemes of ambition and plunder, to prevent them from turning their arms against domestic authority. War, however costly, at least gives to Great Britain security ; and it would be highly impolitic to exchange this for the peril necessarily consequent upon a resumption of amicable relations with a country in such a state of political contagion. Peace would at once prove destructive to the French West India Islands, by delivering them over to anarchy and Jacobinism, and from them the flame of servile revolt would speedily spread to our own colonial possessions in that quarter. Notwithstanding the great successes of the French on the Continent, the balance of conquest in the contest with Great Britain is decidedly in favour of this country : the losses of the Republicans in wealth and resources have been greater since the beginning of the war than those of all the Allies put together ; the forced requisitions and assignats of the French, which have hitherto maintained the contest, cannot be continued without the severities of the Reign of Terror ; and now is

the time, by vigorously continuing the contest, to compel the Directory to augment their redundant paper currency, and thus accelerate the ruin which it is evident such a system must sooner or later bring on the financial resources of the country. Parliament by a large majority supported ministers in the prosecution of the war, in both houses of parliament.¹

CHAP.
XVIII.
1795.

¹ New Ann.
Reg. p. 16,
17. Parl.
Deb. xxxii.
242, 251.

The internal feeling of Great Britain, notwithstanding the continued ill success of its arms on the Continent, was daily becoming more unanimous in favour of the war. The atrocities of the Jacobins had moderated the ardour of many of the most enlightened of their early friends, and confirmed the hostility of almost all the moral and religious, as well as the opulent and influential classes ; the spectacle of the numerous and interesting emigrant families, who had been reduced from the height of prosperity to utter destitution, awakened the compassion of the humane over the whole country ; while the immense successes of the Republicans, and, above all, the occupation of Holland, excited the hereditary and ill-extinguished jealousy of the British people of their ancient rivals. Although, therefore, the division of parties continued most vehement, and the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act still invested the government with extraordinary powers, yet the feeling of the country was gradually becoming more united, and its passions, like those of a combatant who has been wounded in the strife, were waxing warmer with all the blood which it had lost.²

8.
Great in-
crease in the
patriotic
spirit of the
people.

² Ann. Reg.
p. 34, 42.

In France, on the other hand, the exhaustion consequent upon a state of extraordinary and unparalleled exertion was rapidly beginning to display itself. The system of the Convention had consisted in spending the capital of the country by means of confiscations, forced loans, and military requisitions ; and the issue of assignats, supported by the Reign of Terror, had, beyond all former example, carried their designs into effect. But all such violent means of obtaining supplies can, from their very

9.
Exhausted
state of
France.

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nature, only be temporary : how great soever may be the accumulated wealth of a state, it must in time be exhausted, if not supplied by the continued labours of private industry. The Reign of Terror, by stopping all the efforts of individuals to better their condition, and paralysing the arms of labour over the whole country, dried up the sources of national wealth. Even had the fall of Robespierre not put a period to the violent means adopted for rendering it available to the state, the same result must soon have followed from the cessation of all the sources of its supply.¹

¹ Mig. ii.
402. Th.
vii. 433.
Jom. vii.
56.

10.
Naval operations in
the Mediterranean.
Combat of
La Spezia.

During the winter of 1794, the French government made the greatest exertions to put their navy on a respectable footing, but all their efforts on that element led to nothing but disaster. Early in March the Toulon fleet, consisting of thirteen ships of the line, put to sea with the design of expelling the British squadron from the Gulf of Genoa, and landing an expedition in Corsica, and afterwards in Italy. Being ignorant of their intention, Lord Hotham, who commanded the British blockading fleet, was at Leghorn at the time, and they succeeded in capturing the *Berwick*, of seventy-four guns, in the Gulf of St Florent, which found itself surrounded by the French fleet before its crew were aware it had put to sea. But the British admiral was not long in taking his revenge. On the 7th March he set sail from Leghorn with thirteen line-of-battle ships, and on the 13th fell in with the French squadron of the same force. By a skilful manœuvre he succeeded in cutting off two ships of the line, the *Ça Ira* and the *Censeur*, which fell into the hands of the British ; and the remainder of the fleet, after a severe but partial action, was compelled to fall back to the Isles de Hyères, and disembark the land troops which they had on board. By this vigorous stroke the objects of the expedition in the recovery of Corsica and the contemplated descent on Italy were entirely frustrated ;² and such was the dismay with which the soldiers were inspired from their suffer-

March 13.

² James's
Naval Hist.
ii. 81, 92.
Ann. Reg.
p. 138. Jom.
vii. 72, 74.
Marm.
Mem. i. 58.

ings during its continuance, that out of eighteen thousand men who were originally embarked, only ten thousand reached the French army, then lying in the Marquisate of Oneille. Great events were on the wing when the defeat of this maritime expedition took place. The land troops of France embarked on board the fleet were to have been 25,000, under the command of General Buonaparte, and to have landed on the coast of Tuscany, near Leghorn, and commenced the war in Italy in the rear of the whole Austrian positions.

Meanwhile the courts of Vienna and of Turin were making the most vigorous efforts for the prosecution of the war on the Piedmontese frontier. The Austrians reinforced the King of Sardinia with fifteen thousand men, and the Piedmontese troops raised the effective force in the field to fifty thousand men. The French soldiers on that frontier were in a still greater state of destitution and misery than the army of the Rhine. From the effect of desertion and sickness, during the severe winter of 1794, amidst the inhospitable region of the Alps, the total effective forces on that frontier did not exceed forty-five thousand. They occupied the whole crest of the mountains, from Vado to the Little St Bernard, while eighteen thousand of the allied forces were stationed in front of Cairo, fifteen thousand near Ceva, ten thousand in the valleys of Stura and Suza, and six thousand on the lofty ridges which close the upper extremity of the valley of Aosta. Generally speaking, the Republicans were perched on the summits of the mountains, while the Piedmontese forces occupied the narrow defiles where they sink down into the Italian plains.¹

The campaign commenced by a well-concerted enterprise of the French against the Col Dumont, near Mont Cenis, which the Piedmontese occupied with a force of two thousand men, from whence they were driven with considerable loss. But shortly afterwards, Kellermann

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11.
War in the
Maritime
Alps.

¹ Toul, v.
293. Jom.
vii. 76, 78,
80.

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12.

First operations of the Allies, which are successful, and dangers of the French.
May 12.
June 20.

June 26.

having been obliged to weaken his right by large detachments, to suppress a revolt at Toulon, the Imperialists resolved to take the lead by offensive operations against the French forces stationed in the Maritime Alps. For this purpose a simultaneous attack was made on the Republican posts at St Giacomo, Bordinetto, and Vado, which were all fortified. Though the French gained an advantage at the Col de Tende, their line was forced back after several days' fighting, and the Republicans were obliged to evacuate all their positions in the Maritime Alps. The allied forces occupied Loano, Final, and Voltri, with the whole magazines and artillery which had been collected there, and threatened the country of Nice and the territory of the Republic. Had their generals pushed their advantages with vigour, the whole right wing of the French army might have been driven from the mountains, or destroyed; for they could have collected thirty thousand fresh troops, flushed with victory, to crush twenty thousand, harassed with fatigue, destitute of shoes, and literally starving. Kellermann, with the aid of his chief of the staff, Berthier, exerted the utmost degree of skill and ability to compensate the inferiority of their force; but it was with the greatest difficulty, and only by pledging their private credit for the supplies of the army, that they were enabled either to procure provisions for the troops, or inspire them with the resolution to defend the rugged and desolate ridge in which the contest was carried on. Their situation was rendered the more desperate by a naval action between the British and Toulon fleets in the Bay of Frejus, in the course of which the Alcide, of seventy-four guns, blew up; and the French squadron, severely shattered, was compelled to take refuge in the harbour of Toulon. Fortunately for the Republicans, divisions between the allied generals at this time paralysed their movements, and prevented them from following up the advantages which their recent successes, and the open communication with the British fleet, seemed to afford.¹

¹ Jom. vii. 98, 101.
Toul. v. 293, 297, 300.
Massena, Mem. i. 294, 297.

These disasters on the frontiers of Provence induced the government to detach seven thousand men from the army of the Eastern Pyrenees, and ten thousand men from the army of the Rhine, to reinforce the combatants on the Alps. Their arrival, towards the end of August, restored the superiority to the Republican side, while no corresponding addition was made to the forces of the allied generals—another proof, among the many which these campaigns afford, of the total want of concert which prevailed between the Allies on the vast circle of operations from the Rhine to the Mediterranean, and the inestimable advantages which the French derived from the unity of government, and interior line of communication, which they enjoyed. The consequences soon proved ruinous to the allied armies. Kellermann, enabled by this powerful reinforcement to resume the offensive, and encouraged by the evident discord between the allied generals, formed the design of separating the Sardinian from the Austrian forces by a concentrated attack upon the centre of their line, and compelling the latter to give battle alone in the valley of Loano. But before this plan could be carried into effect, the peace with Spain enabled the government to detach to the support of the army of Italy the army of the Eastern Pyrenees, which arrived in the Maritime Alps before the end of September, and the command of the whole was given to General Scherer, Kellermann being detached to the command of the forces in Savoy. This great addition rendered the Republicans nearly double the allied forces in that quarter; while the courts of Turin and Vienna took no steps to avert the storm preparing to burst upon their heads. In truth, the Piedmontese government, experiencing the fate of all weak states in alliance with powerful ones, began to be as jealous of its friends as its enemies; while the Imperial generals rendered it too evident, by their manner and conduct, that they had no confidence either in the sincerity of the government, or the efficiency of their soldiers.¹ Devins, the Piedmontese general, trusted for

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13.

The French
armies
strongly
reinforced,
and resume
the offen-
sive.

¹ Massena,
Mem. i.
300, 304.
Jom. vii.
280, 293,
294, 297.
Toul. v.
301.

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14.
Prepara-
tions for the
battle of
Loano.

his support not to the strength of the mountains which he occupied, but to the co-operation of the British fleet in the Bay of Genoa—a signal error, which soon led to the most disastrous consequences.

The Austrian army, consisting of forty thousand men, was posted in an extensive and fortified position, having its left resting on the little seaport town of Loano, and its right extending to the summit of the impending heights to the northward, from whence it communicated by a chain of fortified posts with the strong places of Ceva, Mondovi, and Coni, held by the Piedmontese troops. The position was strong; but this advantage was balanced by the circumstance that, in case of disaster, the left wing had no means of retreat. The Republicans occupied a position in front of their opponents, their right resting on the little village of Borghetto on the sea-coast, their left extending to the Col de Tende and the summits of the Maritime Alps. The army at first consisted only of thirty-seven thousand men, but it was raised, by the successive arrival of the columns from the Eastern Pyrenees, before the middle of November, to sixty thousand men. Massena,* who had acquired a remarkable knowledge of the localities of that rugged district during the preceding campaigns, and whose great military abilities had already become conspicuous, was intrusted with the command of the attack. Notwithstanding the vast accession of force which the Republicans had received, and the increased activity which they had for some time evinced, the Austrian commander was so little aware of his danger that he lay at La Pietra, detained by an abscess in his mouth, while his officers were chiefly assembled at Feriole, where they were roused from a ball by the sound of the French cannon, at six o'clock on the morning of the 23d November.¹

Scherer, the general-in-chief, commanded the right wing, Massena the centre, and Serrurier the left. Massena's design was to force the Austrian centre with an over-

¹ Jom. vii.
298, 309.
Toul. v. 378,
379. Mas-
sena, i. 305,
312.

* See a biography of MASSENA, *infra*, chap. xx. § 49.

whelming force, and from that vantage-ground to take the remainder of the line in flank and rear. After haranguing his troops, he led them to the assault. The Austrian centre, commanded by Argenteau, made an obstinate resistance at the posts of Bordinetto and Melogno, and drove back the first assailants ; but such was the vehemence of the fresh columns which the Republicans brought up to the assault, that they were compelled at length to retire to a second line on the right bank of the Bormida. Massena soon forced that position also, and, by so doing, got into the interior of the Austrian line, and was able to take all their positions in rear. The result of this first day's combat was, that the centre of the Allies being forced, their left wing was liable to be overwhelmed by the combined attacks of the French centre and right wing. No sooner was the Austrian general made sensible of this disaster, than he took the most precipitate steps to draw back his left wing. But he was not permitted to do this without sustaining the greatest losses. By break of day Augereau was climbing the heights of the Apennines, while his victorious battalions were driving everything before them. In conducting their retreat, the Imperialists did not display the vigour or decision which could alone save them in such perilous circumstances, and which, on the preceding day, had extricated the division commanded by Roccavini from equal danger.¹

The consequence was, that one large body was beset on all sides in a ravine, which formed their only line of retreat ; the head of the column, seized with a panic, was driven back upon the centre, and thrown into utter confusion ; and, in the midst of an unparalleled scene of carnage and horror, forty-eight pieces of cannon, and one hundred caissons, were abandoned. The other column of the left wing only escaped by betaking themselves to almost inaccessible paths, and abandoning all their artillery, and at length, with great difficulty, effected their retreat by the road of the Corniche. Five thousand prisoners, eighty

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15.

Commence-
ment of the
action.
Nov. 23.¹ Massena, i.
314, 327.
Toul. v.
379, 381.
Jom. vii.
310, 315.

16.

Disastrous
retreat of
the Allies,
and deci-
sive conse-
quences of
the battle.

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pieces of cannon, and an immense quantity of ammunition and magazines, fell into the hands of the victors. The total loss on the side of the Austrians was not less than seven thousand, while that of the French hardly amounted to one thousand men. This great victory, which terminated the campaign of 1795 in the Alps, was of decisive importance to the Republic. It gave the French winter-quarters at Loano, Savona, Vado, and other places on the Italian side of the Apennines, and, by rendering them masters of the valleys of the Orba, the Bormida, and the Tanaro, afforded every facility, at the commencement of the following campaign, for achieving the great object of separating the Austrian from the Piedmontese troops. In Savoy, the early fall of the snows precluded active operations at that rigorous season ; but the French continued to occupy their elevated position on the summits of the ridge of Mont Genevre, Mont Cenis, and the Little St Bernard.¹

¹ Jom. vii.
316, 324.
Toul. v.
380, 383.
Massena, i.
324, 330.

17.
Tactics by
which the
battle was
gained by
the Repub-
licans.

This battle, the most decisive yet gained from the commencement of the war by the Republican forces, is well deserving of consideration. It was the first instance of the successful application by the French troops of those principles of strategy which were afterwards carried to such perfection by Napoleon. It is the first victory in which the strength of the adverse army was at once broken by the number of prisoners and artillery which were taken. The same principle which the English adopted under Rodney and Howe—that of breaking the line, and falling with an overwhelming force upon one wing—was here carried into execution with decisive effect. It is worthy of observation, that this system was thus fully understood and practically exemplified by Massena, before Napoleon ever had the command of an army ; another proof among the many which exist, that even the greatest genius cannot by more than a few years anticipate the lights of the age. Such a plan is the natural result of conscious prowess, and an experienced superiority in combat, which leads the attacking force to throw itself, without hesitation, into the midst of the enemy's columns. It will never be

adopted but by the party by whom such a superiority is felt ; it will never be successful but where such a superiority exists.

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The war on the Spanish frontier, during this campaign, was speedily brought to a successful termination. In the Western Pyrenees, the Republicans, during the winter, had sustained the greatest losses from sickness. No less than twelve thousand men had perished in the hospitals since the troops went into their cantonments, and twenty-five thousand were still sick ; only twenty-five thousand, out of a nominal force of sixty thousand, were in a condition to take the field, and they, having long been reduced to half a ration a-day, looked more like spectres than men. It was not till the beginning of June that the Republican forces were so much strengthened, by reinforcements from the interior, as to be able to take the field. The fall of Figueras and Rosas gave the French a secure base for their campaign in Catalonia ; but the operations there, though upon the whole successful, were not of any decisive importance. The Spanish army in that quarter was stationed on the river Fluvia. Several combats of inconsiderable importance took place, the most remarkable of which was that of Bezalu, where Augereau, with a small force, defeated all the efforts of the Spanish army. The opposing armies were still on the Fluvia, when the treaty of peace between the two powers suspended all further hostilities.¹

18.
War in
Spain. In-
decisive
operations
in Cata-
lonia.

¹ Jom. vii.
104, 110,
116. Toul.
v. 218, 221.

It was in Biscay that the decisive action took place which hastened this important event. Twelve thousand men, detached from the army of La Vendée, and replaced in that quarter by the troops who had been engaged in the reduction of Luxembourg, at length put the French commander in a condition to take the field. Towards the end of June, the campaign commenced by an unsuccessful attempt of the French upon the corps commanded by Filangieri ; but, in the beginning of July, Moncey forced the passage of the river Deva, and, by a vigorous attack with his centre, succeeded in dividing the Spanish army

19.
Great suc-
cesses of the
Republicans
in Biscay,
and acces-
sion of
Spain to
the Treaty
of Bâle.
June 25.

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July 17.

into two parts, and interposing a hostile force between them. General Crespo, who commanded the Spanish left, was so vigorously pursued by the Republicans, that he was compelled to abandon both Bilbao and Vitoria, and found himself driven to the frontiers of Old Castile, with a force reduced by the sword and desertion to seven thousand men. The left wing of the invading army was not so successful; and preparations were making for the investment of Pampeluna, when hostilities were terminated by the intelligence of the Treaty of Bâle, concluded on the 12th July between the hostile powers. By this treaty Spain recognised the French Republic, and ceded to France the Spanish half of the island of St Domingo; an acquisition more embarrassing than valuable, in the state of anarchy to which the precipitate measures for the emancipation of the negroes had reduced that once flourishing colony. In return, the Republic relinquished all its conquests in Spain, and the frontiers of the two states were fixed as before the commencement of hostilities. The principal advantage gained to France by this treaty—and it proved in the end a most important one—was the command which it gave the government of two experienced and courageous armies, which were forthwith transferred to the seat of war in the Alps, and powerfully contributed to the great achievements which, in the following campaign, signalised the progress of the army of Italy.¹

¹ Toul. v.
226. *Jom.*
vii. 118, 125.
Martens, vi.
124.

20.
Pacification
of La Ven-
dée.

During the whole winter of 1794–5, the unconquerable Charette maintained, with a few thousand men, the contest in La Vendée. The increase of the Republican forces, the diminution of his own followers, seemed only to augment the resources of his courage. So highly was his perseverance prized, that Suwarroff wrote with his own hand a letter expressive of his admiration; and all the princes of Europe looked to him as the only man capable of restoring the royal cause. But after the fall of Robespierre, and the execution of Carrier, more moderate ideas began to prevail in the French government; and the Committee of Public Salvation became weary of a contest

apparently interminable, and which consumed in intestine war a large portion of the forces of the Republic. At the suggestion of Carnot, they published a proclamation, couched in terms of reconciliation and amity ; and this having led to an address in similar terms from the Royalist chiefs, conferences took place between the contending parties, and a treaty was concluded at La Jaulnais for the final pacification of the west of France.¹

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Jan. 18.
¹ Lac. xii.
298. Jom.
vii. 26.

The principal conditions of this treaty were the according the free and undisturbed exercise of their religion to the inhabitants of the insurgent district ; the establishment of a corps of two thousand territorial guards, composed of the natives of the country, and paid by government ; the immediate payment of two millions of francs for the expenses of the war ; various indemnities to the greatest sufferers from its ravages ; the removal of the sequestration laid on the property of the emigrants, and all those condemned by the Revolutionary Tribunal ; the tacit permission to the people to retain their arms, and an exemption from every kind of tax, levy, or requisition. On their side, the Royalists engaged to submit to the laws of the Republic, and, as soon as possible, surrender their artillery. There were also secret articles, the exact nature of which has never been ascertained ; but Charette and the Royalist party always maintained, that they contained an engagement on the part of the Convention, as soon as the state of public feeling would admit of it, to restore the monarchy. This treaty, though not at the time embraced by Stofflet and the Chouans, was shortly after acceded to by them also. Nine days after the signature of this treaty, Charette and his officers made a triumphal entry into Nantes, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants. Discharges of artillery announced the passage of the Loire, the scene of so many Republican atrocities, by the Royalist hero, who was mounted on a splendid charger, dressed in blue, with the Royalist scarf, and a plume of white feathers on his head.² Four of his lieutenants rode by his side, arrayed in the

21.
Treaty with
the insur-
gents.

April 20.

² Lac. xii.
302, 303.
Beauch. iii.
142, 143.
Jom. vii.
26, 29.

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22.
Gradual
estrangement of the
pacified parties from
each other.

same manner, which formed a striking contrast to the dress of the commissioners of the Convention, distinguished chiefly by the red cap of liberty.

But after the first tumults of public joy had subsided, it became evident that the treaty was a truce rather than a final pacification, and that the seeds of inextinguishable discord subsisted between the opposite parties. The Royalists and the Republicans each associated exclusively with their own party. The officers of Charette appeared at the theatre with the white cockade; though he himself, who had so often rivalled Coligny in war, surpassed him in prudence and caution during peace. Carefully avoiding every menacing or hostile expression, he was yet reserved and circumspect in his demeanour; and it was evident to all that, though anxious to avoid an immediate rupture, he had no confidence in the continuance of the accommodation. The members of the Committee of Public Salvation were impressed with the same conviction. The answer they made to their friends, when pressed on the subject of the treaty, was—"We have little reliance on the submission of Charette; but we are always gaining time, and preparing the means of crushing him on the first symptom of a revolt." In truth, the Republican pride had too good reason to be mortified at this treaty. Conquerors of all their other enemies, they were yet seemingly humbled by their own subjects; and the peasants of La Vendée had extorted terms which the kings of Europe had in vain contended for. It is painful to think that the renewal of hostilities in this district, and its tragic termination, were owing to the delusive hopes held out by, and the ill-judged assistance of, Great Britain.¹

¹ Beauch.^{iii.}
241, 248.
Lac. xii.
304.

23.
Expedition
to Quiberon.

Induced by the flattering accounts of the emigrants, the British Government had long been making great preparations for a descent on the western coast of France, by a corps of those expatriated nobles whose fortunes had been rendered all but desperate by the Revolution. Its success appeared to them so certain, that all the terrors

of the laws against them could not prevent a large force from being recruited among the emigrants in Britain and Germany, and the prisoners of war in the British prisons. The government judged, perhaps wisely, that, as the expected movement was to be wholly national, it would be inexpedient to give the command of the expedition to a British commander, or support it by any considerable body of British troops. The forces embarked consisted of six thousand emigrants in the pay of Great Britain, with a regiment of artillerymen from Toulon, and they carried with them eighty pieces of cannon, with all their equipages and arms, and clothing for eighty thousand men. They were divided into two corps; the first commanded by Puisaye, whose representations had caused the adoption of the plan; and the second by the Count de Sombreuil. A third division of British troops was destined to support the two first, when they had made good their landing on the French coast. The command of the whole was given to the Count d'Artois, and great hopes were entertained of its success, not so much from the numerical amount of the forces on board, as the illustrious names which the nobles bore, and the expected co-operation of the Chouans and Vendéans, who had engaged, on the first appearance of a prince of the blood, to place eighty thousand men at his disposal.¹

¹ Jom. vii.
135, 143.
Th. vii. 454.
Beauch. iii.
419, 421.

The naval affairs of the French, on the western coast, had been so unfortunate as to promise every facility to the invading force. In winter the Brest fleet, in obedience to the positive orders of government, put to sea; but its raw and inexperienced crews were totally unable to face the tempests, which kept even the hardy veterans of Great Britain in their harbours. The squadron was dispersed by a storm, five ships of the line were lost, and the remainder so much damaged, that twelve line-of-battle ships were alone able in June to put to sea. This fleet, accompanied by thirteen frigates, surprised the advanced-guard of the Channel fleet, under the command of Admiral

24.
Running
sea-fight at
Belle-Isle.

June 7.

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June 13.

Cornwallis, near Belle-Isle, on the 7th June ; but such was the skill and intrepidity of the British admiral, that he succeeded in maintaining a running fight the whole day, and at length extricated his little squadron, without any loss, from the fearful odds by which it was assailed. Six days afterwards, Lord Bridport, with fourteen ships of the line and eight frigates, hove in sight, and, after two days' manœuvring, succeeded in compelling the enemy to engage. The British admiral bore down in two columns on the hostile fleet, who, instead of awaiting the contest, immediately fell into confusion, and strained every nerve to escape. In the running fight three ships of the line were captured by the British, and, if the wind had permitted all their squadron to take part in the action, there can be no doubt that the whole French fleet would have been taken or destroyed. As it was, they were so discomfited, that they crowded all sail till they reached the harbour of L'Orient, and made no attempt during the remainder of the season to dispute with the British the empire of the seas.¹

¹ James, ii. 124, 127.
Jom. vii. 147. Ann. Reg. p. 138.
Th. vii. 457.
Beauch. iii. 431, 432.

25.
Landing of the emigrants in Quiberon Bay.

This brilliant engagement having removed all obstacles in the way of the expedition, two divisions of the emigrants set sail, and on the 27th appeared in Quiberon Bay. They immediately landed, to the amount in all of about ten thousand men, and made themselves masters of Fort Penthièvre, which defends the entrance of the peninsula of the same name. Encouraged by this success, they next disembarked all the immense stores and the train of artillery, which were intended to equip the whole Royalist forces of the west of France. But dissensions immediately afterwards broke out between Puisaye and D'Hervilly, neither of whom was clearly invested with the supreme direction, the former having the command of the emigrants, the latter of the British forces. At the same time, a small force detached into the interior having experienced a check, the troops were withdrawn into the peninsula and forts. The Chouans, indeed, flocked in great numbers to the spot, and ten thousand of these

brave irregulars were armed and clothed from the British fleet ; but it was soon discovered that their desultory mode of fighting was altogether unsuited for co-operation with regular forces ; and, on the first occasion on which they encountered the Republicans, they dispersed, leaving the emigrants exposed to the whole shock of the enemy. This check was decisive of the fate of the expedition ; the troops were all crowded into the peninsula, lines hastily constructed to defend its entrance, and it was determined to remain on the defensive—a ruinous policy for an invading force, and which can hardly fail of insuring its destruction.¹

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¹ Jom. vii.
153, 154.
Beauch. iii.
453, 455,
470. Th.
vii. 460.
Ann. Reg.
p. 71.

Meanwhile, an inconceivable degree of agitation prevailed in the Morbihan, and all along the western coast of France. The appearance of a few vessels in the Bay of Quiberon, before the fleet arrived, filled the peasantry with the most tumultuous joy ; without the aid of couriers or telegraphs, the intelligence spread in a few hours through the whole province ; and five hundred thousand individuals, men, women, and children, spent the night round their cottages, too anxious to sleep, and expecting by every breeze further information. One of their chiefs, D'Allegré, embarked on board a fishing-vessel, and reached Lord Cornwallis's vessel, from whom he received a liberal supply of powder, which was openly disembarked on the coast. Instantly the whole population was at work ; every hand was turned towards the manufacture of the implements of war. The lead was stript from the roofs of the houses and churches, and rapidly converted into balls ; the women and children made cartridges ; universal joy prevailed ; the moment of deliverance appeared to be at hand. The intelligence of the disembarkation of the Royalist forces excited the utmost sensation through all France, and demonstrated what might have been the result, if a powerful army, capable of arresting the Republicans in the field, had been thrown into the western provinces, while its numerous bands were organised in an effective manner.²

26.
Prodigious
agitation in
the west of
France.

² Beauch. iii.
432, 434.

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27.Vigorous
measures
of Hoche.
The inva-
ders are
blockaded.
July 7.

Hoche immediately took the most vigorous measures to face the danger. His forces were so disposed as to overawe Brittany, and stifle the symptoms of insurrection which manifested themselves in that extensive district ; while he himself, having collected seven thousand men, proceeded to the attack of the peninsula of Quiberon. On the 7th July, he advanced in close columns to the lines, and, after a smart action, drove the Royalists back in confusion to the intrenched camp which they had formed near Fort Penthièvre. This disaster led to an open rupture between the emigrants and Chouan chiefs. Mutually exasperated, they accused each other of causing the bad success of the operations, and many thousands of the Chouans disbanded, and sought to escape from the peninsula. While vigour and resolution thus characterised all the operations of the Republicans, disunion and misunderstanding paralysed the immense force which, under able and united management, might have been placed at the disposal of the Royalists. The Royalist Committee at Paris, either ignorant of, or determined to counteract the designs of Puisaye on the coast, sent instructions to Charette and the Vendéans in Lower Poitou, to attempt no movement till the fleet appeared on his own shores. He, in consequence, renewed his treaty with the Convention at the very time when the expedition was appearing off Quiberon Bay ; and refused to accept the arms, ammunition, and money, which Lord Cornwallis tendered to him, to enable him to act with effect. At the very time when everything depended upon unity of action, and a vigorous demonstration of strength in the outset, the Royalists of Poitou, Anjou, Upper Brittany, and Maine, were kept in a state of inactivity by the Royalist Committee ; while the emigrants and the peasants of the Morbihan, not a tenth part of the real force of the insurgents, sustained the whole weight of the Republican attack.¹

The misery of the troops, cooped up in the camp, soon

¹ Th. vii.
466, 473.
Beauch. iii.
459, 462,
545, 546,
547. Jom.
vii. 154.

became extreme. Eighteen thousand men found themselves shut up in a corner of land without tents or lodgings of any sort to protect them from the weather ; and the want of provisions soon rendered it absolutely necessary to discover some means of enlarging the sphere of their operations. In this extremity, Puisaye, whose courage rose with the difficulties with which he was surrounded, resolved to make an effort to raise the blockade. He was the more encouraged to make this attempt from the arrival of the third division of the expedition, under the Count de Sombreuil, with the best regiments of the Royalists, and bearing the commission to himself as commander-in-chief of the whole allied forces. For the attempt, four thousand Chouans, under the command of Tinteniach, were sent by sea to the point of St James, to attack the Republican intrenchments in rear, while Count Vauban, with three thousand, was despatched to Carnac to combine with him in the same object, and Puisaye, at the head of the main body, assailed them in front.¹

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28.

Their desperate situation.

July 15.

¹Jom. vii.
157, 160.
Beauch. iii.
478, 481.
Puisaye, v.
226, 231.

Notwithstanding the extensive line, embracing twenty leagues, over which this attack on the Republican intrenchments was combined, it might have been attended with success, had not Tinteniach, misled by orders received from the Royalist Committee at Paris, been induced, after landing, to move to Elvin, where he indeed destroyed a Republican detachment, but was prevented from taking any part in the decisive action which ensued on the peninsula. Meanwhile Vauban, repulsed at Carnac, was compelled to re-embark his troops, and came back only in time to witness the rout of the main body of the Royalists. Puisaye, ignorant of these disasters, marched out of his camp, at daybreak on the 16th, at the head of four thousand five hundred gallant men, and advanced towards the enemy. The Republicans fell back at his approach to their intrenchments ; and a distant discharge of musketry made the Royalists believe that Tinteniach and Vauban had already begun the attack in the

29.

Abortive attempts at succour by the Chouan chiefs.

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rear, and that the decisive moment was come. Full of joy and hope, Puisaye gave the signal for the assault, and the emigrant battalions advanced with the utmost intrepidity to the foot of the redoubts ; but scarcely had they reached them, when several masked batteries opened a terrible fire of grape ; a shower of musketry from above mowed down their ranks, while the strength of the works in front rendered any further advance impossible. The expected attack in the rear never appeared, the Royalists were exposed alone to the destructive fire from the intrenchments, and, after sustaining it for some time with firmness, Puisaye, seeing that the expected diversion had not taken place, gave the signal for a retreat. It was soon converted into a rout by the Republican cavalry, which issued with fury out of the besiegers' lines, and threw the retiring columns into disorder : D'Hervilly was killed, and the Royalists were driven back with such vehemence to the fort on the peninsula, that, but for the fire of the British cruisers, the enemy would have entered it pell-mell with the fugitives.¹

¹ Th. vii.
481, 485.
Jom. vii.
157, 159.
Beauch. iii.
495, 499.
Puisaye, v.
239, 250.

30.
The Royal-
ists are
defeated,
and their in-
trenchments
stormed.

July 20.

This bloody repulse was a mortal stroke to the Royalists. Tinteniac, returning from his unfortunate digression to Elvin towards the scene of action, on the following day, was encountered and killed, after the dispersion of his forces, by a light column of the Republicans. On the same day Sombreuil disembarked his forces, but they arrived in the fort only in time to be involved in the massacre which was approaching. Hoche, resolved not to let the Royalists recover from their consternation, determined to storm the fort by escalade, without going through a regular siege. On the night of the 20th July, the Republicans advanced in silence along the shore, while the roar of the waves, occasioned by a violent wind, prevented the sound of their footsteps being heard in the fort. A division, under Menaye, threw themselves into the sea, in order to get round the rocks on which the redoubts were erected, while Hoche himself advanced with

the main body to escalate the ramparts in front. Menaye advanced in silence with the water up to the shoulders of his grenadiers, and, though many were swallowed up by the waves, a sufficient number got through the perilous pass to ascend the rocky ascent of the fort on the side next the sea. Meanwhile the garrison, confident in their numbers, was reposing in fancied security, when the sentinels on the walls discovered a long moving shadow at the foot of the works. The alarm was instantly given; the cannon fired on the dark living mass, and the soldiers of Hoche, torn in pieces by the unexpected discharge, were falling into confusion, and preparing to fly, when a loud shout from the other side announced the success of the escalading party under Menaye, and the flashes of the cannon showed the tricolor flag flying on the highest part of the fort. At this joyful sight the Republicans returned with fury to the charge, the walls were quickly scaled, and the Royalists driven from their post with such precipitation, that a large park of artillery placed in one of the most advanced quarters was abandoned.¹

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¹ Puisaye, v.
261, 267.
Jom. vii.
162, 166.
Th. vii. 488,
490. Lac.
xii. 342, 343.
Beauch. iii.
509, 517.

Meanwhile Puisaye and Vauban, who were awakened by the noise, made ineffectual efforts to rally the fugitives in the peninsula. It was no longer possible. Terror had seized every heart; emigrants, Chouans, men and women, rushed in confusion towards the beach, while Hoche, vigorously following up his success, was driving them before him at the point of the bayonet. Eleven hundred brave men, the remains of the emigrant legions, in vain formed their ranks, and demanded with loud cries to be led back to regain the fort. Puisaye had gone on board the British squadron, in order to put in safety his correspondence, which would have compromised almost the whole of Brittany, and the young and gallant Sombreuil could only draw up his little corps on the last extremity of the sand, while the surrounding waves were filled with unfortunate fugitives, striving, amidst loud

31.
They are
driven into
the sea or
capitulate.

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cries and showers of balls, to gain the fishing-barks which hovered near the shore. Many of these boats sank from the crowds which filled them, and seven hundred persons lost their lives in that way. The British fleet, from the violence of the tempest, was unable to approach the shore, and the remains of the emigrants were supported only by the fire of a British corvette, which swept the beach. At length the Republicans, penetrated with admiration at the noble conduct of their enemies, called out to them to lay down their arms, and they should be treated as prisoners of war; and Sombreuil, with generous devotion, stipulated that the lives of the soldiers should be spared, and the emigrants allowed to embark, without providing for his own personal safety. The capitulation was agreed to by Humbert and the officers present, though Hoche was not implicated in this agreement; and upon its conclusion an officer was despatched through the surf, who with great difficulty reached the corvette, and stopped its destructive fire.¹*

¹ Jom. vi.
171. Th.
vii. 492.
Lac. xii.
343, 350.
Beauch. iii.
509, 520,
521, 522.
Puisaye,
vi. 511.

32.
Despair and
dreadful
end of the
fugitives.

The wretched fugitives, numbers of whom were women, who had crowded round this last band of their defenders, now rushed in despair into the waves, deeming instant destruction preferable to the lingering torments awaiting them from their conquerors: from the beach, the Republicans fired at their heads, while many of the Royalist officers, in despair, fell on their swords, and others had their hands cut off in clinging to the boats, which were already loaded with fugitives. Though numbers were drowned, yet many were saved by the skill and intrepidity

* Humbert advanced with the white flag, and said aloud, so as to be heard by the whole line, "Lay down your arms; surrender; the prisoners shall be spared." At the same time he asked a conference with the Royalist general; Sombreuil advanced, and, after a few minutes' conversation with the Republican, returned to his own troops, and called out aloud, that he had agreed on a capitulation with the general of the enemy. Many of his officers, more accustomed to the treachery of the Republicans, refused to trust to their promises, and declared that they would rather fight it out to the last. "What!" said Sombreuil, "do you not believe the word of a Frenchman?"—"The faith of the Republicans," said Lanlivy, "is so well known to me, that I will engage we shall all be sacrificed." His prophecy proved too true.

dity of the boats of the British fleet, who advanced to their assistance. One of the last which approached the British squadron contained the Duke of Levis, severely wounded. Such was the multitude which crowded the shore, that the boats were compelled to keep off for fear of being sunk by the numbers who rushed into them. "Approach," exclaimed the French to the boatmen; "we ask you only to take up our commander, who is bleeding to death." The ensign-bearer of the regiment of Hervilly added, "Only save my standard, and I die content:" with heroic self-devotion they handed up their leader and standard, and returned to the Republican fire, which speedily destroyed them.¹

Tallien, whom the Convention had sent down with full powers, as commissioner of government, to Quiberon Bay, made an atrocious use of this victory, and stained with ineffaceable disgrace the glory of his triumph over Robespierre. In defiance of the verbal capitulation entered into with the Royalists by Humbert and the officers engaged in the combat, he caused the emigrant prisoners, eight hundred in number, to be conveyed to Auray, where they were confined in the churches, which had been converted into temporary prisons; while he himself repaired to Paris, where, by a cruel report, he prevailed upon the government to disregard the capitulation, and bathe their hands in the blood of the noblest men in France. "The emigrants," said he, "that vile assemblage of ruffians sustained by Pitt, those execrable authors of all our disasters, have been driven into the waves by the brave soldiers of the Republic; but the waves have thrown them back upon the sword of the law. In vain have they sent forward flags of truce to obtain conditions; what legal bond can exist between us and rebels, if it be not that of vengeance and death?" In pursuance of this advice, the Convention decreed that the prisoners should be put to death, notwithstanding the efforts of the brave Hoche, who exerted himself on the side of mercy.²

¹ Deux
Amis, xiv.
114, 115.
Lac. xii.
350. Jom.
vii. 168,
169. Th.
vii. 493.
Beauch. iii.
526, 527.

^{33.}
Atrocious
cruelty of
the Repub-
licans.

² Deux
Amis, xiv.
114, 116.
Lac. xii. 355.
Beauch. iii.
530. Jom.
vii. 170.

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34.

Noble conduct and death of Sombreuil and the Royalist prisoners.

The unfortunate men were soon aware of the fate which awaited them ; and their conduct in the last extremity reflected as much honour on the Royalist as their murder did disgrace on the Republican cause. The ministers of religion penetrated into those asylums of approaching death, and the Christian faith supported the last hours of their numerous inmates. An old priest, covered with rags and filth, one of the few who had escaped the sword of the Republicans, conveyed its consolations to the numerous captives ; and they joined with him in the last offices of religion. Their last prayers were for their king, their country, and the pardon of their enemies. To the executioners they gave the garments which were still at their disposal. Such was the impression produced by the touching spectacle, that even the Republican soldiers, who had been brought up without any sort of religious impressions, were moved to tears, and joined, uncovered, in the ceremonies which they then, many of them, for the first time in their lives, had witnessed. When brought before the military commission, Sombreuil disdained to make any appeal in favour of himself ; but asserted, in the most solemn terms, that the capitulation had guaranteed the lives of his followers ; that but for a solemn promise to that effect, they would have perished with arms in their hands ; that their death was the work of executioners, not soldiers ; and that their destruction was a crime which neither God nor man would pardon. When led out to execution, he refused to have his eyes bandaged ; and when desired to kneel down to receive the fatal discharge, replied, after a moment's reflection, " I will do so ; but I bend one knee to my God, and another to my sovereign." The other victims who were brought forward, insisted in such vehement terms on the capitulation, that the Republican officers were obliged to give them a respite ; but the Convention refused to listen to the dictates of humanity, and they were all ordered for execution.¹ Seven hundred and eleven perished with a constancy worthy of

¹ Lac. xii.
356, 359.
Beauch. iii.
532, 539.
Jom. vii.
171. Deux
Amis, xiv.
115, 116.

a happier fate ; the remainder were suffered to escape by the indulgence of the soldiers who were intrusted with their massacre, and the humanity of the commissioner who succeeded Tallien in the command. These atrocious scenes took place in a meadow near Auray, still held in the highest veneration by the inhabitants, by whom it is termed the field of martyrs.*

The broken remains of the Quiberon expedition were landed in the Isle of Houat, where they were soon after joined by an expedition of two thousand five hundred men from England, which took possession of the Isle Dieu, and where the Count d'Artois assumed the command. The insurgents of La Vendée, under Charette, fifteen thousand strong, marched in three columns to the Sables d'Olonne to join the expedition ; but so rapid and decisive were the measures of Hoche, that they were soon assailed by a superior force, and compelled to seek safety by separating in the forest of Aizenay. Several partial insurrections at the same time broke out in Brittany, but, from want of concert among the Royalist chiefs, they came to nothing. Soon after, the British expedition, not having met with the expected co-operation, abandoned Isle Dieu, which was found to be totally unserviceable as a naval station, and returned with the Count d'Artois, who evinced neither spirit nor conduct in this ill-fated service, to Great Britain. Charette, in despair at the departure of the expedition, said to the Count de Grignon, who brought the intelligence, " Tell the Prince that you have brought my death-warrant : to-day I am at the

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35.
Rapid decline of the
Royalist
cause in
the west of
France.

* The Republican authors of the valuable " History of the Revolution by Two Friends of Liberty," much to their honour, admit that this violation of the capitulation at Quiberon was indefensible. " Nous n'examinerons point ici," say they, " de quel côté se trouve la vérité ; nous présumons seulement que les émigrés, s'attendant bien au sort qui leur était réservé d'après les décrets portés contre ceux qui seraient pris les armes à la main, n'ont dû se rendre qu'en capitulant qu'ils auraient la vie sauvée ; mais que le Général et le représentant qui, sans doute, n'avaient pas été présents à cette capitulation, ne se regardaient pas comme liés, et pensèrent devoir exécuter rigoureusement les décrets, déterminés d'ailleurs par des raisons de politique qui demandaient un exemple. Sans vouloir blâmer ces motifs, ni justifier des hommes qui rentraient dans

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head of fifteen thousand men; to-morrow I shall not have fifteen hundred. Nothing remains for me but to fly, or seek a glorious death. My choice is made; I shall perish with my arms in my hands." His indignation exhaled in a letter to the Count d'Artois, in which he openly accused him of cowardice. But his position was no longer tenable; he was obliged to fly into the interior. From that moment the affairs of the Royalists rapidly declined in all the western provinces; the efforts of the Chouans and Vendéans were confined to an inconsiderable guerilla warfare; and this was finally extinguished in the succeeding year by the great army and able dispositions of Hoche, whom the Directory invested, at the end of the campaign, with the supreme command. It is painful to reflect how different might have been the issue of the campaign, had Great Britain really put forth its strength in the contest; and, instead of landing a few thousand men on a coast bristling with bayonets, sent thirty thousand to make head against the Republicans, till the Royalists were so organised as to be able to take the field with regular troops.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, xiv.
116, 118.
Beauch. iii.
540, and iv.
29. Mig. ii.
402. Th. vii.
433, 446.
Jom. vii. 56,
240, 249.

36.
War on
the Rhine.
Extreme
penury and
difficulties
of the Re-
publicans.

The situation of the armies on the northern and eastern frontier remained the same as at the conclusion of the last campaign; but their strength and efficiency had singularly diminished during the severe winter and spring which followed. Moreau had received the command of the army of the north, encamped in Holland; Jourdan, that of the Sambre and Meuse, stationed on the Rhine near Cologne; Pichegru, that of the army of the Rhine, cantoned from

leur patrie en rebelles, nous penchons à croire qu'il eût été plus généreux de renier ces émigrés pour des Français, et de les regarder comme des prisonniers de guerre."—*Histoire de la Révolution, par Deux Amis de la Liberté*, xiv. 116, 117. The English historian need feel no hesitation in condemning this cruel violation of a military capitulation, even when said to have been unauthorised, because he will have occasion to pass a similar judgment on similar violations of military conventions by his own government or its allies, even when attended with less tragic consequences—in the cases of Schwartzenberg's breach of the Convention of Dresden, *infra*, chap. lxxxii. § 37; and of Nelson's violation of the Capitulation of Naples, chap. xxvii §§ 98, 99.

Mayence to Strasburg. But all these forces were in a state of extreme penury, from the fall of the paper money in which their pay was received, and totally destitute of the equipments necessary for carrying on a campaign. They had neither caissons, horses, nor magazines; the soldiers were almost naked, and even the generals frequently in want of the necessaries of life, from the failure of the eight francs a-month, in silver, which formed the inconsiderable but necessary supplement to their paper salaries. Those who were stationed in foreign countries contrived, indeed, by contributions upon the vanquished, to supply the deficiency of their nominal pay; and the luxury in which they lived offered a strange and painful contrast to the destitute situation of their brethren on the soil of the Republic. Jourdan had neither a bridge equipage to enable him to cross the Rhine, nor a sufficiency of horses to move his artillery and baggage; Kleber, in front of Mayence, had not a quarter of the artillery or stores necessary for the siege of the place. Discipline had relaxed with the long-continued sufferings of the soldiers; and the inactivity consequent on such a state of destitution had considerably diminished their military spirit. Multitudes had taken advantage of the relaxation of authority following the fall of Robespierre, to desert and return to their homes; and the government, so far from being able to bring them back to their colours, was not even able to levy conscripts in the interior to supply their place. Many resorted to Paris, where the Convention was happy to form them into battalions, for their own protection against the fury of the Jacobins. Soon the intelligence spread that the deserters were undisturbed in the interior; and this extended the contagion to such a degree, that in a short time a fourth of the effective force had returned to their homes. The soldiers thought they had done enough for their country when they had repelled the enemy from its frontiers, and advanced its standards to the Rhine;¹ the generals, doubtful of their authority,

¹ Mig. ii.
402. Th. vii.
434. Jom.
vii. 56, 58.
St Cyr, iii.
31, 34, 41,
50.

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did not venture to take severe measures with the refractory ; and those who remained, discouraged by the loss of so great a number of their comrades, felt that depression which is the surest forerunner of defeat.

37.
State of the
contending
armies, and
fall of Lux-
embourg.

The Austrians, on the other hand, having made the greatest efforts during the winter to reinforce their armies, and not having as yet experienced any part of the exhaustion which extraordinary exertion had brought on the Republican forces, were in a much better state, both in point of numbers, discipline, and equipment. Including the contingents of Suabia and Bavaria, their forces on the Rhine had been raised to a hundred and fifty thousand men ; while the French forces on the same frontier, though nominally amounting to three hundred and seventy thousand men, could only muster a hundred and forty-five thousand in the field.* And such was the state of destitution of these forces, that the cavalry was almost completely dismounted ; and Jourdan could not move a few marches from his supplies, until he got twenty-five thousand horses for the service of his artillery. The Rhine, that majestic stream, so long the boundary of the Roman empire, separated the contending armies from the Alps to the ocean. The Imperialists had the advantage arising from the possession of Mayence. That bulwark of the Germanic Empire had been put into the best possible state of

* The distribution of the Republican forces at the commencement of the campaign was as follows, in effective troops, deducting the detachments and sick :—

	Active.	Garrisons.	Nominal, including garrisons.
North, - -	67,910	29,000	136,250
Sambre and Meuse,	87,630	66,000	170,300
Rhine and Moselle,	56,820	96,800	193,670
Alps, - -	14,000	4,800	21,000
Italy, - -	27,500	24,000	93,500
Eastern Pyrenees, -	43,290	4,000	82,790
Western ditto, -	33,780	5,000	75,180
West, - -	42,000	...	70,200
Shores of Brittany,	51,000	...	78,400
Cherbourg, -	26,000	...	37,700
	449,930	229,000	958,990 ¹

¹ *Jom. vii. 56.*

defence, and gave the Allies the means of making an irruption with security upon the left bank. Notwithstanding this great advantage, such was the consternation produced by their former reverses, that they remained inactive on the right bank of the river till the end of June, when Marshal Bender, having exhausted all his means of subsistence, and seeing no hope of relief, was compelled to surrender the important fortress of Luxembourg to the Republican generals. Ten thousand men, and an immense train of artillery, on this occasion fell into the hands of the victors.¹

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June 24.

¹ Th. vii.
435. Jom.
vii. 38, 59,
61. St Cyr,
iii. 35.

While the Imperialists were thus allowing the bulwark of the Lower Rhine to fall into the hands of the enemy, the Prince of Condé, on the Upper Rhine, was engaged in a negotiation, by which he hoped to procure the frontier fortresses of Alsace for the Bourbon princes. This prince, whose little corps formed part of the left wing of the Austrian army, was engaged in a correspondence with the malcontents in Alsace; and from them he learned that Pichegru was not altogether inaccessible to negotiation. In fact, that illustrious man was, on many accounts, discontented, both with his own situation and that of his country. Like Dumourier and Lafayette, he had been horror-struck by the atrocities of the Convention, and saw no hope of permanent amendment in the weak and disunited government which had succeeded it; while, at the same time, the state of destitution to which, in common with all the army, he was reduced by the fall of the assignats, in which their pay was received, rendered him discontented with a government which made such returns for great patriotic services. During all the extremities of the Reign of Terror, Pichegru and his army, instead of obeying the sanguinary orders of the Dictators, had done everything in their power to furnish the means of escape to their victims. He had nobly refused to execute the inhuman decree, which forbade the Republican soldiers to make prisoners of the British troops. His soldiers, after

38.
Secret negotiations between Pichegru and the Allies.

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the conquest of Holland, had set a rare example of discipline ; and the sway he had acquired over them was such, as to prevent all the license and insubordination which had followed the conquest of Flanders by the forces of Dumourier. In these circumstances nothing was more natural or laudable, than that the same general who had secured the independence of his country by his arms, should strive to establish its internal prosperity by the restoration of a constitutional throne ; and it is certain that he engaged in a correspondence with the Prince of Condé for the attainment of this object. The Republican historians allege that his fidelity was shaken by different motives ; that his passion for pleasure was restrained by the elusory nature of his pay, which, although nominally four thousand francs a-month, was in reality only one hundred francs, from the depreciation of the assignats, and that he yielded to the offer of a marshal's baton, the government of Alsace, a pension of 200,000 francs, the chateau and park of Chambord, and a million in silver. No decisive evidence has yet been produced on the subject ; but it is certain that, after six months consumed in mysterious communication, Pichegru broke off the negotiation, and prepared to obey the orders of the Convention, by commencing the campaign.¹

¹ Th. vii.
441. Lac.
xiii. 86.
Jom. vii. 62,
67. St Cyr,
iii. 69, 71,
75.

39.
Vast forces
of the Aus-
trians on
the Rhine,
which the
Republicans
cross.

Wurmser, to whom the cabinet of Vienna had intrusted the command of its forces on the Upper Rhine, remained till the beginning of September without making any movement. Mutually afraid, the hostile armies occupied the opposite banks of the Rhine, without attempting to disquiet each other. Wurmser's forces, including garrisons, amounted to eighty thousand men ; while those of Clairfait, including the same species of force, were ninety-six thousand. The formidable state of defence in which Mayence had been placed, left no hope of reducing it without a regular siege ; while a squadron of gun-boats on the Rhine gave the Allies the command both of that stream and of the numerous islands which lie on its

bosom. Jourdan, having at length procured the necessary bridge-equipage, prepared to cross the river in the beginning of September. On the 6th of that month he effected the passage without any serious opposition, at Eichelcamp, Neuwied, and Dusseldorf, and compelled the garrison of the latter town to capitulate. After repulsing the Austrian corps in that vicinity, he advanced slowly towards Lahn, and established himself on that stream a fortnight afterwards. Meanwhile Pichegru, in obedience to the orders of government, crossed the Upper Rhine at Mannheim, and, by the terrors of a bombardment, compelled that important city—one of the principal bulwarks of Germany—to capitulate. This unexpected event threatened to change the fortune of the war; for Pichegru, now securely based on the Rhine, seemed equally in a situation to combine with Jourdan for a general attack on the allied forces, or to direct his arms to the reduction of Mayence.¹

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Sept. 6.

Sept. 20.

¹ Jom. vii.
179. Toul.
v. 314. St
Cyr, iii. 96,
97, 105, 110.

Alarmed by these successes, the Austrian generals made the most prudent dispositions which could have been adopted to arrest the enemy. Clairfait, unable, after the loss of Mannheim, to defend the line of the Lahn, abandoned his position on that river, and fell back behind the Maine; while Jourdan, following his opponent, and leaving a division before Ehrenbreitstein, descended into the rich valley of the Maine, and invested Mayence on the left bank of the Rhine, at the same time that Pichegru was debouching from Mannheim. In these critical circumstances, Clairfait displayed a degree of vigour and ability which led to the most important results. Reinforced by fifteen thousand Hungarian recruits, that able general deemed himself in a situation to resume the offensive. Accumulating his forces on his own right, he succeeded, by a skilful march, in turning the French left, and forcing them to fall back into a situation where they had him in their front and the Rhine in their rear. Jourdan was now in the most

40.
Able and
vigorous
measures of
Clairfait in
defence.

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perilous position. His communications being threatened, his flank turned, and his rear resting on a great river, exposed his army to destruction in the event of defeat. To avert the catastrophe of the French army a century before at Turin, when Marshal Marsin was totally defeated by Prince Eugene, no other course remained but to raise the siege of Mayence, and fall with his whole forces on Clairfait, who was now in communication with Wurmser, or to abandon all his positions, and recross the Rhine. The disorganised state of his army rendered the former project, afterwards so ably practised by Napoleon before Mantua, impracticable ; and therefore he commenced his retreat. It was conducted in the utmost confusion ; cannon, men, and horses, arrived pell-mell at the bridges over the Rhine, and hardly fifty men of any corps were to be found together when they regained the left bank. The loss in men was inconsiderable, but the moral consequences of the retrograde movement were equivalent to a severe defeat. Had Clairfait been aware of the circumstance, a great and decisive blow might have been struck ; for General Marceau, to whom the blockade of Ehrenbreitstein had been intrusted, having burned his flotilla when he raised the siege, some of the burning vessels were carried down by the stream to Neuwied, where they set fire to the bridge established at that place, which was speedily consumed. Kleber, with twenty-five thousand men, who had not as yet repassed, was now in a desperate situation ; but, fortunately for him, the Allies were ignorant of the accident, and Clairfait about the same time relinquished the pursuit and drew his forces towards Mayence, where he meditated operations which soon produced the most important results.¹

¹ Toul. v.
314, 316.
Jom. vii.
200, 202.
St Cyr, iii.
150, 159,
189, 192.

Suddenly abandoning the pursuit of the French left wing, this intrepid general turned by forced marches to Mayence, at the head of a chosen corps, and at daybreak on the following morning issued out by several columns to attack the lines of circumvallation which were still in

the hands of the Republicans on the left bank of the river. These lines, the remains of which still excite the admiration of the traveller, were of immense extent, and required an army for their defence. The French army had been engaged for a year in their construction, and they were garrisoned by thirty thousand men. The secret of the march of the Imperial army had been so well preserved, that the besiegers were first apprised of their arrival by the sight of the formidable columns which advanced to storm their intrenchments. The Imperialists advanced in three columns, and in admirable order, to the assault; and such was the consternation of the Republicans, that they abandoned the first line almost without opposition. An event of that description is generally decisive of the result in the defence of intrenchments, because the defenders are thunderstruck by seeing their redoubts forced in any quarter, and, instead of thinking of driving back the enemy as in the open field, in general give over all for lost, and betake themselves to a precipitate flight. So it proved on the present occasion. The measures of the Austrians were so well taken, that the French found themselves assailed in all quarters at once: they made for some time an obstinate defence in the second line; but at length, perceiving that they were turned by other forces, which had crossed below Mayence, they fell into confusion, and fled in all directions. Their loss in this brilliant affair was three thousand men; and they were deprived, in addition, of the whole artillery, magazines, and stores, which they had collected with so much care for the siege of the bulwark of Germany.¹

This attack on the part of Clairfait was combined with other operations along the whole line, from Coblenz to Mannheim. On the same day on which it took place, an island, which the Republicans had fortified a league above Coblenz, was captured, with two battalions which composed its garrison; and by this success, which rendered the evacuation of the *tête-de-pont* of Neuwied unavoidable

CHAP.
XVIII.

1795.

41.

He attacks
the lines
round May-
ence.
Oct. 29.¹ Toul. v.
320, 322.
Jom. vii.
252, 259.
St Cyr, iii.
200, 202.

42.

Other opera-
tions along
this river,
and the Re-
publicans
driven from
before
Mannheim.
Oct. 31.

CHAP.
XVIII.

1795.

Nov. 9.

Nov. 10.
1 Toul. v.
324. Th.
viii. 95. St
Cyr, iii. 210,
219.

below Mayence, they were entirely driven to the left bank of the river. At the same time, Wurmser attacked and carried the *tête-de-pont* erected by Pichegru on the Neckar; and this success, coupled with the great blow struck by Clairfait, compelled Pichegru to retire behind the Pfrim, which was not accomplished without the utmost confusion. The small number of troops which Clairfait had brought to the left bank of the Rhine, alone saved the Republicans on this occasion from the greatest disasters. Pichegru had left a garrison ten thousand strong in Mannheim, and the position which he had occupied enabled him to communicate with the place by his right flank. Despairing of being able to effect its reduction as long as this communication was preserved open, the Austrians resolved to dislodge the French from their position. For this purpose Clairfait was reinforced with twelve thousand men from the army of the Upper Rhine, and he immediately made preparations for an attack. It took place on the following day; and, after an obstinate resistance, the Republicans were compelled to abandon the line of the Pfrim, and retire behind the Elsbach, leaving Mannheim to its own resources.¹

43.
Capitulation
of Mann-
heim, and
Pichegru
driven to the
lines behind
the Queich.

Nov. 26.

While these important events were going forward on the Upper Rhine, Jourdan, with his defeated and discouraged force, was suffering the most cruel perplexity on the Lower. His army was with difficulty reorganised, and put in a condition for active service; and the Directory having meanwhile succeeded to the helm of affairs, Carnot transmitted to him the most pressing orders to advance to the succour of Mannheim, which was now severely pressed by the Austrians. At length, towards the end of November, he put himself in motion at the head of forty thousand men, and advanced to the Nahe, in the midst of the most dreadful weather. But all his efforts were in vain. The central position of Clairfait and Wurmser both covered the siege of Mannheim, and prevented the junction of the Republican armies; the

defiles by which a communication could have been maintained were all in the hands of the Imperialists ; and after several unsuccessful attacks, Jourdan was obliged to fall back, leaving Mannheim to its fate. That strong fortress, with a garrison of nine thousand men, capitulated at the same time to Wurmser. This important event was decisive of the fate of the campaign. Wurmser, now relieved from all apprehensions as to his communications, brought his whole forces to the left bank of the Rhine, and drove back Pichegru to the lines of the Queich, and the neighbourhood of Landau ; while Clairfait pressed Jourdan so severely, that he began to construct an intrenched camp at Traerbach, with a view to secure his passage over the Moselle. In this disastrous state it was with the utmost joy that he received a proposition from the Austrians, who, as well as their opponents, were exhausted with the fatigues of the campaign, for a suspension of arms during the winter, in virtue of which, a line of demarcation was drawn between the contending parties ; and both armies were put into winter-quarters on the left bank of the Rhine.¹

CHAP.
XVIII.1795.
Nov. 28.

Dec. 16.

¹ Jom. vii.
270, 276.
Th. viii. 115,
130. Toul.
v. 323, 324.
St Cyr, ii.
240, 257.

The French marine was so completely broken by the disasters in the Mediterranean, and at L'Orient, that nothing more of consequence took place at sea during the remainder of the year. The British availed themselves of their maritime supremacy to make themselves masters of the important station of the Cape of Good Hope, which surrendered to Sir James Craig on the 16th of September. Unable to act in large squadrons, the French confined themselves to mere predatory expeditions ; and the vast extent of the British commerce afforded them an ample field for this species of warfare, from which, towards the close of the year, they derived great gains.²

44.
Maritime
operations.
Capture of
the Cape of
Good Hope.

Sept. 16.

² Ann Reg.
p. 139. Jom.
vii. 330.

By the result of this campaign the Allies gained considerable advantages. The career of French conquest was checked, the Republican soldiers driven with disgrace

CHAP.
XVIII.

1795.

45.

Results of
the cam-
paign. De-
clining state
of the affairs
of the Re-
publicans.

behind the Rhine ; and while the Imperial forces, so lately disheartened and desponding, were pressing forward with the energy of conquest, their opponents, distracted and disorderly, had lost all the spirit by which they were formerly animated. The movements of Clairfait and Wurmser proved that they had profited by the example of their adversaries. Their tactics were no longer confined to a war of posts, or the establishment of a cordon over an extensive line of country, but showed that they were aware of the value of an interior line of operations, and of the importance of bringing an overwhelming force to the decisive point. By adopting these principles, they checked the career of conquest, restored the spirits of their troops, and not only counterbalanced the disadvantage of inferior numbers, but inflicted severe losses upon their adversaries. This result was the natural effect of the continuance of the contest. The energy of a democracy is often formidable during a period of popular excitement, and is capable of producing unparalleled exertions for a limited period ; but it seldom succeeds in maintaining a lasting contest with a regular and organised government. The efforts of the populace resemble the spring of a wild beast ; if the first burst fails, they rarely attempt a second. During the invasions of 1793 and 1794, the French nation was animated with an extraordinary spirit, and urged to the defence of their country by every motive which can sway a people. But their efforts, how great soever, after a time necessarily and rapidly declined. By the prolongation of the contest they had exhausted the means of longer maintaining war ; the vehemence of their exertions, and the tyranny by which they were called forth, rendered it impossible that they could be continued. The nation, accordingly, which had twelve hundred thousand men on foot during the invasion of 1794, could not muster a third of the number in the following campaign ; and the victor of Fleurus, within a year after his triumph, was compelled to yield to an inferior enemy.

Nothing also is more remarkable than the comparatively bloodless character of the war up to this period. The battle of Jemappes, which surrendered Flanders to Dumourier ; that of Nerwinde, which restored it to the Imperialists ; that of Fleurus, which gave it back to the Republicans, were all concluded at a cost of less than five thousand men to the vanquished ; and the loss sustained by the French in the storming of their lines before Mayence, which decided the fate of the German campaign, was only three thousand men : whereas the loss of the Austrians at Aspern was thirty thousand ; that of the Russians at Borodino forty thousand ; that of Wellington's army at Waterloo twenty-two thousand ; and out of seven thousand five hundred native British who conquered at Albuera, not two thousand were unwounded at the conclusion of the fight. So much more desperately did the parties fight as the contest advanced ; so much more vehement were the passions excited in its later stages ; and so much more terrible was the struggle when the Republicans, instead of the lukewarm soldiers of the South, met the sturdy inhabitants of the North of Europe.

Everything, therefore, conspires to indicate that, by a concentrated and vigorous effort, after the first burst of French patriotism was over, the objects of the war might have been achieved, and security from aggression afforded to the neighbouring powers. These objects were not the forcing of an unpopular dynasty upon France, or of a tyrannical government upon its people, but the compelling it to retire within those limits which are consistent with the peace of Europe, and give up its attempts to propagate its revolutionary principles in other states. Had Prussia, instead of weakly deserting the alliance in the beginning of 1795, sent a hundred thousand men to the Rhine, to support the Austrian troops ; had Great Britain raised three hundred thousand soldiers, instead of a hundred and twenty thousand, and sent eighty thousand native British to Flanders, instead of five thousand emigrants

CHAP.
XVIII.

1795.

46.

Feeble character of the war up to this period.

47.

Great results which might have followed a vigorous exertion of the allied strength.

CHAP.
XVIII.

1795.

to Quiberon Bay, no one can doubt that, in the state of exhaustion in which France then was, the Republic would have been compelled to abandon all its conquests. The moment her armies were forced back from foreign states, and thrown upon their own resources—the moment that war was prevented from maintaining war—the weakness arising from financial embarrassments and blighted industry would have become apparent ; the decrepitude of age would at once have fallen on the exhausted state. The great error of the Allies, and, above all, of Great Britain, at this period, was, that they did not make sufficiently vigorous efforts at the commencement ; and thought it enough, in a struggle with the desperate energy of a revolutionary state, to exert the moderate strength of an old and methodical warfare. Nothing is so ill judged, in such a situation, as the niggardly conduct which prolongs a contest : by spending fifty millions more at its commencement, Great Britain might have saved five hundred millions ; by sending an army worthy of herself to the Continent in 1795, she might have then achieved the triumph of 1815. It was to this period of lassitude and financial embarrassment, necessarily consequent upon a series of extraordinary revolutionary exertions, that Mr Pitt always looked for the successful termination of the war. Possibly, even with the slight efforts which alone were then thought practicable by this country, his expectations might have been realised before many years had elapsed, if the ordinary course of human affairs had continued. But the hand of fate was on the curtain ; a new era was about to open on human affairs, and a resistless impulse to be given for a period to French ambition, by the genius of that wonderful man who has since chained the history of Europe to his own biography.

CHAPTER XIX.

FRENCH REPUBLIC—FROM THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE TO
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DIRECTORY.

“It is a sad calamity,” says Jeremy Taylor, “to see a kingdom spoiled, and a church afflicted ; the priests slain with the sword, and the blood of nobles mingled with cheaper sand ; religion made a cause of trouble, and the best men most cruelly persecuted ; government turned, and laws ashamed ; judges decreeing in fear and covetousness, and the ministers of holy things setting themselves against all that is sacred. And what shall make recompense for this heap of sorrows, when God shall send such swords of fire ? Even the mercies of God, which shall then be made public, when the people shall have suffered for their sins. For so I have known a luxuriant vine swell into irregular twigs and bold excrescences, and spend itself in leaves and little rings, and afford but little clusters to the wine-press ; but when the lord of the vine had caused the dressers to cut the wilder plant, and make it bleed, it grew temperate in its vain expense of useless leaves, and knotted into fair and juicy bunches, and made account of that loss of blood by the return of fruit. It is thus of an afflicted kingdom cured of its surfeits, and punished for its sins ; it bleeds for its long riot, and is left ungoverned for its disobedience, and chastened for its wantonness ;¹ and when the sword hath let forth the corrupted blood, and the fire hath purged the rest, then it enters into the double joys of restitution, and gives God

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.
1.

Moral effect
of seasons of
suffering on
nations.

¹ Jeremy
Taylor, vi.
182, Heber's
edition.

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

thanks for his rod, and confesses the mercies of the Lord in making the smoke to be changed into fire, and his anger into mercy."

2.
Example
of this in
France dur-
ing the Re-
volution.
General
reaction
against the
Reign of
Terror.

Never were these truths more strongly exemplified than in France during the progress of the Revolution. Each successive convulsion had darkened the political atmosphere. Anguish and suffering incessantly increased; virtue and religion seemed banished from the earth; relentless cruelty reigned triumphant. The bright dawn of the morning, to which so many millions had turned in thankfulness, was soon overcast, and darkness deeper than midnight overspread the world. "But there is a point of depression in human affairs," says Hume, "from which the change is necessarily for the better." This change is not owing to any oscillation between good and evil, in the transactions of the world, but to the reaction which is always produced by long-continued suffering, and the provision made by nature for the correction of vicious institutions by the consequences which they produce. Wherever the tendency of institutions is erroneous, an under-current begins to flow, destined to open men's eyes to their imperfections; when they become destructive, it overwhelms them. The result of the conspiracy of Robespierre and the Municipality, proved that this point had been reached under the Reign of Terror. On all former occasions since the meeting of the States-General, the party which revolted against the constituted authorities had been victorious; on that it was vanquished. The Committees of the Assembly, the subsisting government, crushed a conspiracy headed by the powerful despot who wielded the revolutionary energy of France, and who was still supported by the terrible force of the faubourgs, which no former authority had been able to withstand. This single circumstance demonstrated that the revolutionary movement had reached its culminating point, and that the opposite principles of order and justice were beginning to resume their sway. From that moment the

anarchy and passions of the people subsided, the storms of the moral world began to be stilled, through the receding darkness the ancient landmarks began dimly to appear, and the sun of heaven at length broke through the clouds which enveloped him.

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

“Defluit saxis agitatus humor :
Concedunt venti, fugiuntque nubes,
Et minax (nam sic voluere) ponto
Unda recumbit.”

An interesting episode in the annals of the Revolution occurred in the prisons during the contest which preceded the fall of the tyrant. From the agitation and cries in the streets, the captives were aware that a popular movement was impending, and a renewal of the massacres of 2d September was anticipated from the frantic multitude. Henriot had been heard in the Place du Carrousel to pronounce the ominous words, “We must purge the prisons.” The sound of the *générale* and the tocsin made them imagine that their last hour had arrived, and they embraced each other with tears, exclaiming, “We are all now eighty years of age !” After two hours of breathless anxiety, they heard the decree of the Convention cried through the streets, which declared Robespierre *hors la loi*, and by daybreak intelligence arrived that he was overthrown. The transports which ensued may be imagined ; ten thousand prisoners were relieved from the prospect of instant death. In one chamber, a female prisoner, who was to have been brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal that very day, was made acquainted with the intelligence, by means of signs, from a woman on the street, before she ventured to give public demonstration of her joy ; her name became afterwards memorable—it was JOSEPHINE BEAUHARNAIS, future Empress of France.¹

3.
Singular
event in
the prisons
on the fall
of Robes-
pierre.

¹ Mémoires
de José-
phine, i.
327. Lac.
xii. 124,
125. Mig.
ii. 348, 349.

The transports were the same through all France. The passengers leapt from the public conveyances, embraced the bystanders, exclaiming, “My friends, rejoice ! Robes-

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

4.

Universal
transports
which his
fall occa-
sioned.

pierre is no more ; the tigers are dead !” Two hundred thousand captives in the prisons throughout the country were freed from the terror of death ; three hundred thousand trembling fugitives issued from their retreats, and embraced each other with frantic joy on the public roads. An epitaph designed for his tomb expressed in powerful language the public opinion on the consequence of prolonging his life :

“ Passant ! ne pleure point son sort ;
Car s’il vivait, tu serais mort.” *

No words can convey an idea of the impression which the overthrow of Robespierre produced in Europe. The ardent and enthusiastic in every country had hailed the beginning of the French Revolution as the dawn of a brighter day in the political world, and in proportion to the warmth of their anticipations had been the grievousness of their disappointment at the terrible shades by which it was so early overcast. The fall of the tyrant revived those hopes, and put an end to those apprehensions. The moral laws of nature were felt to be still in operation ; the tyranny had only existed till it had purged the world of a guilty race, and then it was itself destroyed. The thoughtful admired the wisdom of Providence, which had made the wickedness of men the instrument of their own destruction ; the pious beheld in their fall an immediate manifestation of the Divine justice. “ The dawn,” it has been not less eloquently than justly said, “ of the arctic summer day after the arctic winter night ; the great unsealing of the waters ; the awakening of animal and vegetable life ; the sudden softening of the air ; the sudden blooming of the flowers ; the sudden bursting of whole forests into verdure, is but a feeble type of that happiest and most genial of revolutions,—the Revolution of the 9th Thermidor.”¹ †

The Revolution of 9th Thermidor, however, was by

* “ Passenger ! bewail not his fate,
For had he lived, thou hadst died.”

† MACAULAY, in review of the *Memoirs of BARÈRE*, *Edinburgh Review*.

¹ Lac. xii.
126, 128.
Deux Amis,
xiii. 3, 5.

no means, as is commonly supposed, at least in its first stages, the reaction of virtue against wickedness. It was the effort of one set of assassins, threatened with death, against another. The leaders of the revolt in the Convention which overthrew the central government, Billaud Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, Fouché, Amar, Barère, were in no respect better, in many worse, than Robespierre and St Just. Equally unscrupulous in the means they employed, equally bloody in the executions they ordered, they were far more selfish in their objects, and more despicable in their characters. With them the Revolution was not, as with Robespierre, a desperate and sanguinary struggle for the happiness of man, in which all its supposed enemies required to be destroyed; it was merely an engine for advancing their private fortunes. They conspired against him, not because they hated his system, but because they perceived it was about to be directed against themselves. Little amelioration of the state government was to be expected from their exertions. It was public opinion, clearly and energetically expressed after the fall of the Committee of Public Salvation, which compelled them to revert to the path of humanity. But this opinion was irresistible; it forced itself upon persons the most adverse to its principles, and finally occasioned the destruction of the very men, who, for their own sakes, had brought about the first resistance to the reign of blood.¹

CHAP.
XIX.1795.
5.Real nature
of the Re-
volution of
9th Ther-
midor.¹ Hist. de la
Conv. iv.
215, 218.

The Convention had vanquished Robespierre by means of a unanimous effort, headed and directed by the committees; but this revulsion of public feeling proved too strong for the committees themselves. The charm of the Decemviral government was broken when its head was destroyed. On the day after the fall of Robespierre there were but two parties in Paris—that of the committee, who strove to maintain the remnant of their power, and that of the liberators, who laboured to subvert them. Every day brought forth a new proof of the vehement

6.
Gradual
fall of the
Committee
of Public
Salvation.

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

revulsion of public feeling. In the Théâtre Français the bust of Marat was pulled down and broken to pieces amidst loud applause. His bones were ejected from the Pantheon, and cast into a common sewer. The picture of his death, which hung in the hall of the Convention, was removed, and the savage inscriptions provoking to blood, with which the walls of the city had been covered, were effaced. The party by whom these changes were urged on, was from the first distinguished by the name of *Thermidorians*, from the day on which their triumph had been achieved. Tallien was at their head, and they soon numbered among their supporters all the generous youth of the metropolis. The party of the committees was paralysed by the fall of the Municipality of Paris, sixty of the most obnoxious members of which had been executed the day after the death of Robespierre. Their influence arose only from the possession of the machinery of government, and the vigour of some of their members, all of whom saw no safety to themselves but in the maintenance of the revolutionary government. Billaud Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, Barère, Vadier, Amar, and Carnot, constituted a body influenced by the same principles, and capable of maintaining their authority in the most difficult circumstances. But after the counter-revolution of the 9th Thermidor, the current of public opinion soon became irresistible, and they were impelled, in spite of themselves, into measures of humanity.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, xiii.
6, 8. Mig.
ii. 348, 349.
Th. vii. 4,
14. Lac.
xii. 128,
129. Hist.
de la Conv.
iv. 224, 225.

7.
And rise of
the Ther-
midorians,

The Thermidorians were composed of the whole centre of the Convention, the remnant of the Royalists, and the survivors of the party of Danton. Boissy d'Anglas, Sièyes, Cambacérès, Chénier, Thibaudeau, from the moderate party, ranged themselves beside Tallien, Fréron, Legendre, Barras, Bourdon de l'Oise, Rovère, and others, who had followed the colours of Danton. Four of this party were chosen to replace the executed members of the Committee of Public Salvation, and soon succeeded in moderating its sanguinary measures. But great caution

was necessary in effecting the change. The Jacobins were still powerful from their numbers, their discipline, and their connection with the affiliated societies throughout France ; and their early support of the Revolution identified them in the eyes of the populace with its fortunes. Hence the Thermidorians did not venture at first to measure their strength with such antagonists, and four days after the death of Robespierre the sittings of that terrible club were resumed. But so vehement was the current of public opinion, so dreadful had been the general suffering under the Reign of Terror, that the friends of clemency daily gained accessions of strength. On the 27th July, the seventy-three members of the Assembly, who had protested against the violence of 31st May, were brought forth from prison, and joined their liberators.¹

The two parties were not long in measuring their strength after their common victory. Barère, on the part of the Committee, proposed on the 30th July, that the Revolutionary Tribunal should be kept up, and that Fouquier Tinville should continue to act as public accuser. At his name a murmur of indignation arose in the Assembly, and Fréron, taking advantage of the general feeling, exclaimed—"I propose that we at length purge the earth of that monster, and that Fouquier be sent to lick up in hell the blood which he has shed." The proposal was carried by acclamation. Barère endeavoured to maintain the tone of authority which he had so long assumed ; but it was too late. He was obliged to leave the tribune, and the defeat of the Committee was apparent. The trial of this great criminal took place with extraordinary formality, and in the most public manner, before the Revolutionary Tribunal. It developed all the injustice and oppression of that iniquitous court : the trial of sixty or eighty prisoners in one sitting of three or four hours ; the inhuman stopping of any defence ; the signature by the judges of blank sentences of condemnation,

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

July 27.

¹ Deux

Amis, xiii.

9, 11. Mig.

ii. 349, 350.

Lac. xii.

129, 130.

Th. vii.

16, 17.

8.

Contests
between the
two parties.
Trial and
death of
Fouquier
Tinville.
July 30.

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

¹ Bull. du
Tribunal
Rév. Procès
de Fouquier
Tinville,
No. 25, 28,
60. Toul.
v. 232. Mig.
ii. 351. Lac.
xii. 130. Th.
vii. 37, 38.

9.
Gradual
return to
humane
measures.

to be afterwards filled up with any names by the clerks ; and the atrocious celerity of the condemnations. After a long process he was condemned, and fourteen jurymen of the Tribunal along with him. The sentence bore among other charges, "having under colour of legal judgment, put to death an innumerable crowd of French citizens of every age and sex." The indignation of the populace was strongly manifested when they were led out for execution ; cries, groans, and applauses broke from the crowd as they passed along. The sombre, severe air of Fouquier especially attracted notice ; he maintained an undaunted aspect, and answered the reproaches of the people by ironical remarks on the dearth of provisions under which they laboured.¹

The next measures of the Convention were of a humane tendency. The law of 22d Prairial, against suspected persons, was repealed ; and though the Revolutionary Tribunal was continued, its forms were remodelled, and its vengeance directed in future chiefly against the authors of the former calamities. The captives were gradually liberated from confinement, and, instead of the fatal chariots which formerly stood at the gates of the prisons, crowds of joyous citizens were seen receiving with transport their parents or children restored to their arms. Agreeably to the advice formerly given by Danton and Camille Desmoulins, they were not all discharged at once, but were gradually liberated from the jails, and all at length restored to their friends. At the end of two months, out of ten thousand suspected persons, not one remained in the prisons of Paris. The efforts of the Jacobins to prevent the discharge of the persons confined in prison in the departments, whom they designated as all aristocrats, were very great : but the numerous and heart-rending details of the massacres which were transmitted to the Convention from every part of the country overwhelmed all opposition. Among the rest, one related by Merlin de Thionville excited particular attention. It was an

order signed by a man named Lefèvre, an adjutant-general, addressed to, and executed by, a Captain Macé, to drown at Paimbœuf forty-one persons ; of whom one was an old blind man seventy-six years of age ; twelve were women of different ages ; twelve girls below twenty years ; fifteen children, of whom ten were between five and ten years of age, and five still at the breast. The order was couched in these terms, and was rigidly executed : “ It is ordered to Peter Macé, captain of the brig Des-

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

¹ Hist. de la
Conv. ii.
242, 243.
Bull. du
Trib. Rév.
Procès de
Carrier,
No. 12, 13.

post.”¹
The imprudent zeal of one of their party, however, soon convinced the Thermidorians how necessary it was to proceed with caution in the counter-revolutionary measures. Without any general concert with his friends, Lecointre denounced Billaud, Collot, and Barère, of the Committee of General Safety, and Vadier, Amar, and Vouland, of that of Public Salvation, in the National Assembly. This measure was premature ; it alarmed the friends of the Revolution, and was almost unanimously rejected. But for the strong feeling against the former government which existed in Paris, this defeat might have been fatal to the friends of humanity, and restored the Reign of Terror.²

10.

Premature
denuncia-
tion of the
Jacobin
leaders.

² Deux
Amis, xiii.
26, 28. Lac.
xii. 132,
144. Mig.
ii. 351, 352.
Hist. de la
Conv. iv.
220, 231.

By the advice of Madame de Fontenay, the beautiful mistress, and afterwards the courageous and eloquent wife of Tallien, the Thermidorians called to their support the youth of the metropolis—men at an age when generous feeling is strong, and selfishness weak, and whose minds, unwarped by the prejudices or passions of former years, had expanded during the worst horrors of the Revolution. They soon formed a powerful and intrepid body, ever ready to combat the efforts of the Jacobins, and confirm the order which was beginning to prevail.

11.

Rise of the
Jeunesse
Dorée.

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

1 Deux

Amis, xiii.
39, 40. Lac.
xii. 135, 147.
Th. vii. 38,
39, 112, 113.
Mig. ii. 352,
356, 357.

12.

Their con-
tests with
the Jaco-
bins. They
close their
hall and
destroy their
power.

Sept. 7.

Composed of the most respectable ranks in Paris, they almost all numbered a parent or relation among the victims of the Revolution, and had imbibed the utmost horror at its sanguinary excesses. To distinguish themselves from the populace, they wore a particular dress, called the *Costume à la Victime*, consisting of a robe without a collar, expressive of their connection with those who had suffered by the guillotine. Instead of arms, they bore short clubs loaded with lead, and were known by the name of *La Jeunesse Dorée*. They prevailed over the Jacobins at the Palais Royal, where they had the support of the shopkeepers of that opulent quarter, but were worsted in the gardens of the Tuileries, where the vicinity of the club of their antagonists rendered revolutionary influence predominant. Their contests with the democrats were incessant; on the streets, in the theatres, in the public walks, they were ever at their post, and contributed by their exertions in a most signal manner to confirm and direct the public mind. In revolutions, the great body of mankind are generally inert and passive; the lead speedily falls into the hands of those who have the boldness to take it.¹

These contests between the two parties at length assumed the most important character. The whole of Paris became one vast field of battle, in which the friends of humanity, and the supporters of terror, strove for the mastery of the republic. But public opinion pronounced itself daily more strongly in favour of the Thermidorian party. Billaud Varennes declared in the Jacobin Club—"The lion sleeps, but his wakening will be terrible." This declaration occasioned the greatest agitation in Paris; and the cry was universal to assault the club of the Jacobins. The national guard of the sections supported the troops of the Jeunesse Dorée, and their combined forces marched against that ancient den of blood. After a short struggle the doors were forced, and the club dispersed. On the following day they proceeded to

lay their complaints before the Convention, but Rewbell, who drew up the report on their complaints, pronounced their doom in the following words :—" Where was the Reign of Terror organised ? At the club of the Jacobins. Where did it find its supporters and satellites ? Among the Jacobins. Who are they who have covered France with mourning ; peopled its soil with Bastilles ; and rendered the Republican yoke so odious, that a slave bent beneath its fetters would refuse to live under it ? The Jacobins. Who now regret the hideous yoke from which we have so recently escaped ? The Jacobins. If you want courage to pronounce on their fate at this moment, you have no longer a Republic, since you have the Jacobins." The Convention provisionally suspended their sittings ; but the club having resumed their meetings on the following day, they were again assailed by the Troupe Dorée, with the cry, " Vive la Convention ! à bas les Jacobins !" After an ineffectual struggle, they were finally dispersed, with every mark of ignominy and contempt ; and on the following day, the commissioners of the Convention put a seal on their papers and terminated their existence.¹

Thus fell the club of the Jacobins, the victim of the crimes it had sanctioned, and the reaction these had produced. Within its walls all the great changes of the Revolution had been prepared, and all its principal scenes rehearsed ; from its energy the triumph of the democracy had sprung, and from its atrocity its destruction arose—a signal proof of the tendency of revolutionary violence to precipitate its supporters into crime, and render them at last the victims of the atrocities which they have committed. A contemporary journalist has preserved a striking account of the universal transports at the closing of this terrible club, which, with its affiliated societies, had so long covered all France with mourning. " It was a truly touching spectacle to behold the joy of the people at the extinction of the Jacobins.

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

Sept. 8.
1 Deux
Amis, Lac.
xii. 116, 155.
Mig. ii. 357,
359. Toul.
v. 135, 136.
Th. vii.
115, 116,
135, 151,
159, 164.

13.
Universal
joy at their
overthrow.

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

All hearts were opened at the news of the salutary decree of the Convention. In the evening the streets and public places resounded with cries of joy, with almost childish mirth, with games and dances. *Every one pressed his friend's hand, without mentioning why* : all understood what was meant. In the coffee-houses, in the cabarets, toasts were universal to the health of the National Convention ; in the public gardens they parodied a stanza of the Carmagnole with the words—

‘ Les Jacobins avaient promis
De faire égorger tout Paris.’ *

“ Many citizens spontaneously illuminated their windows ; a sweeter, a more cordial joy was universal than had appeared during the noisy fêtes conceived by the Committee of Public Salvation, to strew with flowers the bloody avenue to slavery, and adorn the victims whom they were about to sacrifice to their ambition. Is there one amongst you who, during those odious fêtes, did not feel his heart sink within him, his flesh creep, and who, in the enchantment of that compulsory illumination, in the whirl of bought dances, cries of joy, and strains of music in those gardens, decked with so much care, did not withdraw within himself in the midst of the intoxicated multitude, to weep over the present, and mourn over the future ? Very different is the spontaneous joy, the unbought entrancement, of this auspicious moment.” ¹

¹ L'Orateur, du Peuple, No. xxxi. See also Hist. Parl. xxxvi. 179. L'Ami des Citoyens, No. xxiii.

14.
Trial of the prisoners from Nantes.

Another event, which contributed in the most powerful manner to influence the public mind, was the trial of the prisoners from Nantes, who had been brought up to Paris under the reign of Robespierre. These captives, who were one hundred and thirty in number when they left the banks of the Loire, were reduced to ninety-four by the barbarous treatment they experienced on the road. Their trial was permitted to proceed by the Thermidorian party, in hopes that the detail of the

* The Jacobins had promised
To massacre all Paris.

atrocities of the Jacobin leaders would increase the horror already existent in the public mind. It proceeded slowly, and the series of cruelties which it developed exceeded even what the imagination of poets had figured of the most terrible. The exposure of these, and similar cruelties, could not fail in increasing the public indignation against the society of the Jacobins, from whose emissaries they had all proceeded. The prisoners were acquitted amidst the acclamations of the people ; and the public voice, wrought up to the highest pitch by the recital of these barbarities, loudly demanded the punishment of their authors. Pressed by the force of public opinion, the Convention was obliged to authorise the accusation of Carrier, the head of the Revolutionary Committee of Nantes, how unwilling soever they might be to sanction a proceeding which they were conscious might be drawn into an example fatal to many of themselves.¹

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

¹ Bulletin
du Trib.
Rég. No. 20,
21. L'Af-
faire de
Nantes.
Toul. v. 101,
105, 114.
Th. vii.
144, 146.

The trial of this infamous man developed a still more dreadful series of iniquities, and contributed, perhaps more than any other circumstance, to confirm the inclination of the public mind. One of the witnesses deposed “ that he had obtained permission to visit a chamber in the prisons where three hundred infants were confined ; he found them groaning amidst filth, and shivering with cold ; on the following morning he returned, but they were all gone ; they had been drowned the preceding night in the Loire.” Many thousand persons of both sexes, and all ages, including an extraordinary number of children, had perished in this inhuman manner. Carrier did not deny these atrocities, but sought to justify himself by alleging the orders of the Committee of Public Salvation at Paris, and the necessity of making reprisals against the fanatical cruelty of the insurgents of La Vendée. The massacres of the children, of the women, and the noyades of the priests, which could not be vindicated on that ground, he alleged he had not commanded, although he could not dispute that he had

15.
Trial and
execution of
Carrier, and
dreadful
atrocities
divulged in
its progress.

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

¹ Bulletin du
Trib. Rév.
No. 20, p.
77. Lac.xii.
167, 168.
Toul.v. 129,
130. Th.
vii. 169.

permitted them, in a district where his authority was unbounded. After a long trial, this infamous wretch was found guilty of numerous noyades and illegal massacres, condemned and executed. With him were also convicted Grand-Maison and Pinard, members of the Revolutionary Committee of Nantes. The acquittal of the others excited the public indignation so strongly, that the Convention ordered that they should be arrested anew, and the Tribunal which had absolved them abolished.¹

16.
Return to
humanity
in the Con-
vention.
Dec. 8.

Yielding to the growing influence of public opinion, which daily pronounced itself more strongly in favour of humane measures, the Convention at length revoked the decree which had expelled the nobles and priests; and Cambacérès, taking advantage of a moment of enthusiasm, proposed a general amnesty for all revolutionary offences other than those declared capital by the criminal code. The proposition was favourably received, and remitted to a committee. On the following day, Tallien proposed the suppression of all the Revolutionary Tribunals; the Jacobins vehemently opposed the proposal, and the Convention, fearful of precipitating matters by too hasty measures, contented themselves for the present with abridging their power.²

² Toul. v.
143. Hist.
Parl. xxxvi.
188, 189.

17.
Public man-
ners during
this period.

The manners of the people during those days of reviving order, exhibited an extraordinary mixture of revolutionary recklessness with the reviving gaiety and elegance of the French character. The captives recently delivered from prison comprised almost all the higher classes in Paris, and their habits gave the tone to the general manners of the day. Never was seen a more remarkable union than their circles afforded of grief and joy, of resentment and forgetfulness, of prudence and recklessness, of generous exaltation and blamable indifference, of Jacobin vulgarity and reviving elegance. The first attempt made was to return to gentleness of feeling and social enjoyment; any approach to luxury, in the dilapidated state of their fortunes, was out

of the question. The barbarous retaliation of severity for cruelty, which produced such a frightful reaction in the south of France, was unknown in the metropolis : in the saloons of the Thermidorians, nothing but the most humane measures were proposed, or the most generous sentiments uttered. Minds subdued by misfortune, and influenced by the approach of death with religious feeling, breathed, on their first return into the world, much of that benevolent and Christian spirit which had been awakened in many cases for the first time in their minds. Nor was the transformation less violent and immediate in the dresses generally worn ; but in the tumult of reviving enjoyment, pleasure, as is always the case in such circumstances, was sought after with an avidity inconsistent with decorum, fatal to morals. The ladies, in their desire to attract admiration, outstripped the bounds of decency in their attire.* The hideous unwashed Jacobins, with their long black uncombed locks, their haggard eyes and revolting stare, disappeared. Their filthy rags, assumed to please the mob, were exchanged for elegant dresses ; out of the secret deposits of their plunder were brought out stores of wealth : furniture, clothes, pictures, all of the most costly description, suddenly made their appearance ; the removal of the necessity of assuming the appearance of incorruptibility revealed at once the extent of their cupidity, and the magnitude of their spoliations.¹

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1795.

The two centres of the society of Paris were the Faubourg St Germain and the quarter of the Chaussée d'Antin ; the first comprising the residence of the remains of the nobility, the last of the bankers and merchants who had risen to wealth during the recent troubles. Rigid economy pre-

¹ Deux
Amis, xiv.
30, 34. Lac.
xii. 172, 173.
Th. vii.
218, 223.

18.
Bals des
Victimes,
and other
indications
of the public
manners.

* " Le libertinage était pris pour la galanterie, et l'indécence la plus condamnable pour un raffinement d'élégance. La licence dans la parure fut portée à un tel point que les femmes ne se montraient plus dans les assemblées, et dans les promenades publiques, que la gorge absolument nue, les bras totalement découverts ; un seul voile de gaze cachait si foiblement le reste de leur corps, que non seulement toutes leurs formes étaient nécessairement indiquées par la légèreté de leur vêtement, mais que sa transparence laissait souvent apercevoir la nudité."—*Deux Amis*, xiv. 33, 34.

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XIX.

1795.

vailed in the former ; the pride of riches, the passion for newly acquired distinction, swayed the latter. At the theatres, at the public assemblies, everything breathed the recent deliverance from death. No such thunders of applause shook the opera as when the orchestra struck up the favourite air of the Troupe Dorée, called *Le Réveil du Peuple*, which successfully combated the revolutionary energy of the Marseillaise hymn. One of the most fashionable and brilliant kind of assembly was called *Le Bal des Victimes*, the condition of entrance to which was the loss of a near relation by the guillotine. Between the country-dances they said, "We dance on the tombs;" and a favourite dress for the hair was adopted from the way in which it had been arranged immediately before execution. The almanacs most in request were called "Les Almanachs des Prisons," in which the sublime resignation and courage of many of the captives were mingled with the ribaldry and indecency with which others had endeavoured to dispel the gloom of that sombre abode. But the Christian virtue of charity was never more eminently conspicuous than among those who, themselves recently delivered from death, knew how to appreciate the sufferings of their fellow-creatures.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, xiv.
30, 31. Lac.
xii. 174, 176.
Mig. ii. 356.
Marm. i. 88.

19.
Gradual
abrogation
of the Revo-
lutionary
measures.
Amnesty to
children of
those exe-
cuted dur-
ing the Re-
volution.
Dec. 8.
Dec. 17.
Dec. 19.
Dec. 22.

Meanwhile the Convention gradually undid the laws which had been passed during the government of the Terrorists. The law of the maximum of prices, which had been introduced to favour the tumultuous inhabitants of the towns, at the expense of the industrious labourers of the country ; the prohibitions against Christian worship ; the statutes confiscating the property of the Gironde party, condemned by the Committees, were successively repealed. This was followed by a general measure, restoring to the families of all persons condemned since the Revolution, their property, so far as it had not been disposed of to others. The Abbé Morellet published an eloquent appeal to the public, entitled *Le Cri des Familles*, and Legendre concluded a powerful speech in their favour with these

touching words :—" If I possessed one acre belonging to these unfortunate sufferers, never could I taste of repose. In the evening, while walking in my solitary garden, I would fancy I beheld in each rosebud the tears of an orphan whom I had robbed of its inheritance." The bust of Marat was soon after broken at the Théâtre Feydeau by a band of the Troupe Dorée, as it had already been at the Théâtre Français, and next day his statues were destroyed in all the public places. About the same time, the survivors of the proscribed members of the Girondist party, who had been in concealment since the revolt of the 31st May, were restored to their seats in the Assembly; and the Thermidorian party saw itself strengthened by the accession of Louvet, Isnard, Lanjuinais, Henri Larivière, and others, alike estimable for their talents, and their constancy under adverse fortune, and whose numerous crimes had been expiated by the sufferings, their natural consequence, which they had undergone.¹

Supported by the accession of so many new members, and the increasing force of public opinion, Tallien and his friends at length proceeded to the decisive measure of impeaching Billaud Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, Barère, and Vadier, the remaining heads of the Jacobins. " You demand the restoration of terror," said Tallien: " let us consider the means it employs before we estimate its effects. A government can never inspire terror but by menacing with capital punishments, by menacing without intermission, without distinction, without investigation, all who oppose it: by menacing without proof, on mere suspicion, on no ground at all: by striking continually with relentless hand, in order to inspire terror into all the world. You must suspend over every action a punishment, over every word a threat, over silence even a suspicion: you must place under every step a snare, in every family a traitor, in every tribunal an assassin: you must put every citizen to the torture, by the punishment of multitudes, and subsequent massacre of the executioners,

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

Dec. 29.
¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 199,
200, 220.
Mig. ii. 361,
363. Lac.
xii. 177, 179.
Th. vii. 229,
230. Hist.
de la Conv.
iv. 237, 245.

20.
Impeach-
ment of
Billaud
Varennes
and the
Jacobin
leaders.

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 254,
255. Deux
Amis, xiii.
80. Hist.
de la Conv.
iv. 231.

21.
Extreme
distress and
agitation in
France.
March 1795.

² Deux
Amis, xiii.
37, 39. Hist.
Parl. xxxvi.
184, 192.
Lac. xii. 174,
191, 194.
Mig. ii. 364,
365. Th. vii.
249, 250.
Hist. de la
Conv. iv.
232.

lest they should become too powerful. Such is the system of governing by terror ; does it belong to a free, humane, and regular government, or to the worst species of tyranny ?” These eloquent words produced a great impression : the opposition against the Jacobins became so powerful, both within and without the Assembly, that a return to severe measures was impossible, and the government was swept along by the universal passion for a humane administration.¹

This bold step, however, excited the most violent tumults among the democratic party. Several causes at that period contributed to inflame the public discontent. The winter, which had set in with uncommon severity, exposed many of the lower classes to suffering ; a scarcity of provisions was, as usual, ascribed by the multitude to the conduct of government, and the dreadful depreciation of the assignats threatened almost every individual in the kingdom with ruin. Instruments of this dangerous description, to the amount of above eight milliards of francs, or £320,000,000 sterling, had been put into circulation by the Revolutionary government ; and although their influence had been prodigious at the moment in sustaining the credit of the state, and even causing its coffers to overflow, yet their nominal value soon gave way, from the distrust of government, the vast excess of the circulating medium, and the immense quantity of confiscated property which was at the same time brought to sale. They had now fallen to one-fifteenth of the sum for which they were issued. “The worst rebellions,” says Lord Bacon, “are those which proceed from the stomach ;” and of this truth Paris soon furnished an example. The Jacobin leaders, threatened with accusation, used their utmost exertions to rouse the populace, and the discontent arising from so much suffering made them lend a willing ear to their seditious harangues.² Carnot was not included in the Act of Accusation ; but he had the magnanimity to declare that, having acted with his colleagues for the public good,

he had no wish but to share their fate. This generous proceeding embarrassed the accusers; but, in order to avoid implicating so illustrious a character in the impeachment, it was resolved to limit it to some only of the members of the Committee, and Amar, Vouland, and the painter David, were excluded: the last of whom had disgraced a fine genius by the most savage revolutionary fanaticism.

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1795.

On the 1st April, a revolt was organised in the faubourgs, to prevent the trial of Billaud Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, Barère, and Vadier, which was to commence two days after. The cry of the insurgents was—"Bread, the constitution of 1793, and the freedom of the patriots in confinement." The universal suffering which had followed the democratic rule, afforded the Jacobins too powerful a lever to move the passions of the people; and, as usual in such cases, they found no difficulty in making them believe that their distresses were not owing to their own excesses, but to the abridgment of their power: "Since France had become republican," says the graphic annalist, himself a member of the Convention, and supporter of Robespierre, "every species of evil had accumulated upon its devoted head: famine, a total cessation of commerce, civil war, attended by its usual accompaniments—conflagration, robbery, pillage, and murder. Justice was interrupted, the sword of the law wielded by iniquity: property spoliated, confiscation had become the order of the day, the scaffold permanently erected, calumnious denunciations held in the highest estimation. Nothing was wanting to the general desolation. Virtue, merit of every sort, was persecuted with unrelenting severity: debauchery encouraged, arbitrary arrests universally established, the revolutionary armies ploughing through the state like devouring flame, cruelty everywhere fomented, hatred and disunion brought into the bosom of domestic circles. Never had a country descended so low: never had a people been overwhelmed

22.
Revolt of
the populace
to save the
Jacobin
leaders.
April 1.

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 260,
262. Hist.
de la Conv.
ii. 215, 216.

by a similar chaos of crimes and abominations." Instigated by such sufferings, a formidable band soon surrounded the Convention. Speedily they forced their way in; drunken women, abandoned prostitutes, formed the revolting advanced guard; but speedily a more formidable band of petitioners, with pikes in their hands, filled every vacant space.¹

23.
Defeat of
the insur-
gents.

Having penetrated to the bar, they commenced the most seditious harangues. "You see before you," said they, "the men of the 14th July, the 10th August, and the 31st May. They have sworn to conquer or die: they will maintain the constitution of 1793, and the Declaration of Rights. It is high time that the working-classes should cease to be the victims of the selfishness of the rich, and the cupidity of merchants. Where is the abundant harvest of the last year? Have we destroyed the Bastille to raise up a thousand others for the imprisonment of the patriots? Public misery is at its height: the assignats are worth nothing; for you have passed decrees which have destroyed their value: and you, sacred Mountain, the men of the 14th July invoke your aid in this crisis to save the country." With these words, ascending the benches of the members, they seated themselves with the deputies of the Mountain. Everything announced the approach of a crisis; the Jacobins were recovering their former audacity, and the majority of the Convention, labouring under severe apprehension, were on the point of withdrawing, when, fortunately, a large body of the Troupe Dorée, who had assembled at the sound of the tocsin, entered the hall, under the command of Pichegru, chanting in loud strains the "Réveil du Peuple." The insurgents knew their masters; and that formidable body, before whom the strength of the monarchy had so often trembled, yielded to the courage of a few hundred half-disciplined young men.² The crowd, lately so clamorous, gradually withdrew from the bar, and in a short time the accused members were left alone to the

² Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 269,
274. Lac.
xii. 198.
Mig. ii. 365.
Hist. de la
Conv. iv.
295, 305.

vengeance of the Convention, to answer for a revolt which they had so evidently excited.

The Thermidorians made a humane use of their victory. They were fearful of making too large chasms in the ranks of the allies by whose assistance they had so recently been delivered from the tyranny of Robespierre; and they justly feared a reaction in the public mind, if they themselves put in practice, on their first triumph, the bloody maxims which they had so severely condemned in their adversaries. By concert with the leaders of the Girondists, Billaud Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, and Barère, were condemned to the limited punishment of transportation; and seventeen members of the Mountain, who had seemed most favourable to the revolt, were put under arrest, and the next day conducted to the chateau of Ham. The persons thus put in confinement included Cambon, Ruamps, Thuriot, Amar, and the whole strength of the Jacobin party. The transference of the condemned deputies to the Chateau of Ham was not accomplished without some difficulty. They were once rescued by the insurgent populace; but Pichegru having arrived at the head of three hundred of the Troupe Dorée, the mob was dispersed, and the prisoners were again seized and conducted to the place of their confinement. Nothing is more instructive in the history of the French Revolution than the important consequences which, in all its stages, attended the efforts of even the smallest body, acting energetically in the cause of order.¹

The fate of these revolutionary leaders was commensurate to their crimes, in the colony to which they were ultimately conveyed. Their lives, which were in the first instance threatened by the burning climate of Cayenne, were saved by the generous kindness of the Sisters of Charity, who, in the hospital on that distant shore, continued to practise towards the most depraved of mankind the sublime principles of forgiveness of injuries. Collot

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

24.

Humanity
of the Ther-
midorians
after their
victory.
The accused
are only
transported.

¹ Deux
Amis, xiii.
108. Hist.
Parl. xxxvi.
274, 300.
Lac. xii. 198,
200. Mig.
ii. 367.
Toul. v. 213.
Th. vii. 290,
300.

25.

Their sub-
sequent fate
at Cayenne.

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

d'Herbois, shortly after his recovery, endeavoured to engage the slaves of the colony in a revolt ; being defeated in the attempt, he was confined in the fort of Sinumari, where he died from the effects of a bottle of spirits, which he swallowed in a moment of despair. Billaud Varennes survived long the other companions of his exile ; his hardened mind prevented him from feeling the pangs of remorse, and his favourite occupation was teaching a parrot, which he had tamed, the jargon and the indecencies of the revolutionary language. His punishment, and it was a dreadful one, consisted in the tempest of passion which his depraved disposition had roused within his own breast.

" Nullo martiro fuor che la tua rabbia,
Sarebbe al tuo furor dolor compito." *

Barère had nearly died, shortly after his sentence, of a loathsome malady which he had contracted at Rochefort ; but he survived that disease, escaped from prison, and was restored to France by Napoleon in 1800, where he lingered out his life an obscure pamphleteer in the imperial pay.† Before the expiry of his exile, Billaud Varennes beheld the arrival, in the hut next his own, of the illustrious Pichegru, whose vigour had been so instrumental in conducting him thither.¹

By these successive blows, the Jacobins were broken, but not subdued. By the fall of Robespierre, and the

¹ Lac. xii.
201, 202.
Mém. de
Barère,
Introd. 87,
100. Deux
Amis, xiii.
108, 109.

* "No martyrdom but your own rage
Could be a pain equal to your atrocity."

DANTE, *Inferno*, xiv. 65.

† Barère was employed in obscure situations by Napoleon, and was alive at Brussels, where he was living in great poverty, in 1831. It was one of his favourite positions at that time, "that the world could never be civilised till the punishment of death was utterly abolished, and that no human being had a right to take away the life of another." This was the man who said in 1793, "the Tree of Liberty cannot flourish if it is not watered by the blood of a king;" and "*Il n'y a que les morts qui ne reviennent pas.*" So completely does a revolution unshingle the human mind, that no reliance can be placed, in its vicissitudes, on anything but the sense of duty which religion inspires. Before the Revolution he was the Marquis de Vieussac, with an ample fortune. He died at Brussels on the 13th January 1841.—See SIR ARTHUR BROOKE FALKNER'S *Travels in Germany*, i. 196.

execution of his associates in the Municipality, they had lost the Commune ; the closing of their place of debate had deprived them of their centre of operations ; by the exile of so many members of the Convention, they were bereft of their ablest leaders. Still there remained to them the forces of the faubourgs, the inhabitants of which retained the arms which they had received at an early period of the revolutionary troubles ; while their needy circumstances, the general suffering produced by the Revolution, and the universal exasperation felt at the high price of provisions, rendered them ready for the most desperate enterprises. In the *Annales Patriotiques* of 19th May 1795, it was stated—"It would be difficult to find a people upon the face of the globe so unhappy as that of Paris. Yesterday we received each a ration of two ounces of bread ; that pittance, small as it is, has been diminished to-day. This measure has spread consternation among the people, who now murmur louder than ever. All our streets resound with the cries of those who are dying of famine." The failure of the revolt on 1st April did not discourage their leaders ; they saw in it only a proof of the necessity of making a greater effort with more formidable forces. A general insurrection of the faubourgs was agreed on for the 20th May ; above thirty thousand men, armed with pikes, were then to march against the Convention—a greater force than that which had proved victorious on many former occasions,—and never before had they been animated by so ferocious a spirit. Their rallying cry was, "Bread, and the constitution of 1793."¹

The misery at Paris at this time, in consequence of the famine which the Reign of Terror had brought upon France, and the general failure of agricultural exertion, the necessary result of the forced requisitions and the law of the maximum, had now risen to the very highest pitch. A contemporary republican writer gives the following energetic picture of the public suffering : "The Conven-

CHAP.
XIX.1795.
26.Renewed
efforts of
the Jaco-
bins. Ex-
cessive
misery at
Paris.

May 19.

¹ Deux
Amis, xiii.
125, 129.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 310,
312. An-
nales Pa-
triotiques,
March 19,
1795.27.
Excessive
misery at
Paris.

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

¹ Duchess
D'Abrantes,
i. 296. Mig.
ii. 370.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 320,
328.

28.
Prepara-
tions for the
insurrection
of the 20th
May.

tion had lost all its popularity, because it had evinced so little disposition to relieve the sufferings of the people, which had now become absolutely intolerable. The anarchists, the enemies of order, profited by this ferment, and did their utmost to augment it, because that class reaped no harvest but in the fields of misery. France, exhausted by every species of suffering, had lost even the power of uttering a complaint ; and we had all arrived at such a point of depression, that death, if unattended by pain, would have been wished for even by the youngest human being, because it offered the prospect of repose, and every one panted for that blessing at any price. But it was ordained that many days, months, and years, should still continue in that state of horrible agitation, the true foretaste of the torments of hell." The mobs which had, for some weeks preceding, assembled in the streets on account of the high price of provisions and universal suffering, had prevented the government from being aware of the approach of a great popular movement, or of the magnitude of the danger which threatened them.¹

No sooner, however, were they informed of it, on the day before the revolt, by the committees of government, than the leaders of the Convention took the most prompt measures to maintain their authority. They instantly declared their sittings permanent, voted all assemblages of the people seditious, named commanders of the armed force, and summoned the national guard of the sections by the sound of the tocsin to their defence. The succeeding night (19th May) was one of the most frightful which occurred during the whole course of the Revolution. From sunset, Paris was the theatre of unceasing perturbation. Seditious groups were formed on the quays, in the squares, on the Boulevards ; a crowd of noisy discontented persons traversed every quarter, calling on the discontented, the famishing, the desperate to revolt ; bands of women went from door to door knocking aloud, raising alarming cries in the streets, deploring the fate of

the “good Robespierre, whom the aristocrats had put to death,” and calling on the people to rise against their oppressors, march straight to the Tuileries, and install the true republicans in power. The générale and the tocsin sounded at the same time : to their incessant clang were soon joined hideous cries, fierce vociferations, mingled with the occasional discharge of muskets and pistols : while the cannon of government sounded at intervals ; and the deep-toned bell, placed lately on the summit of the great pavilion of the Tuileries, by its loud and measured toll called the national guard to the defence of the Convention.¹

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¹ Deux
Amis, xiii.
128, 130.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 311,
315. Hist.
de la Conv.
iv. 310, 311.
Lac. xii. 218.
Th. vii. 381.
Mig. ii. 367.

Hesitation, as usual in presence of real danger, appeared on the following morning among the supporters of order. The Jacobins were already in arms ; immense assemblages appeared round the Panthéon, in the Place of the Bastille, in that of Nôtre-Dame, in the Place de Grève, in the Place Royale. The whole city was in agitation : vast bodies of insurgents by daybreak surrounded the Convention, and by ten o'clock every avenue to its hall was choked with a forest of pikes. The insurgents had adopted the most energetic measures to restore the democratic order of things. In the name of the “ Insurgent people, who had risen to obtain bread, and resume their rights,” they established a provisional committee, which immediately abolished the existing government, proclaimed the democratic constitution of 1793 ; the dismissal of the members of administration, and their arrest ; the liberation of the patriots in confinement ; the instant convocation of the primary assemblies ; the suspension of all authority not emanating from the people. They resolved to create a new Municipality to serve as a centre of operations, to seize the telegraph, the barriers, the cannon of alarm, and the tocsin, and to invite all the forces, both regular and irregular, to join the banners of the people and march against the Convention.²

29.
Danger of
the govern-
ment.

² Deux
Amis, xiii.
141, 143.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 313,
321. Mig.
ii. 368, 369.
Th. vii. 384.
Hist. de la
Conv. iv.
311, 312.

Scarcely were the decrees of the Convention, to guard

CHAP.
XIX.1795.
30.Convention
besieged.
Heroic con-
duct of
Boissy
d'Anglas.
The mob
master the
Convention.

against these dangers, passed, when a furious multitude broke into the hall, crying aloud for bread and the constitution of 1793. The President Vernier behaved with a dignity befitting his situation. "Your cries," he said, "will not alter one iota of our measures; they will not hasten by one second the arrival of provisions: they will only retard them." A violent tumult drowned his voice; the insurgents broke open the inner doors with hatchets, and instantly a vociferous multitude filled the whole of the room. A severe struggle ensued between the national guard, intrusted with the defence of the Convention, and the furious rabble. Vernier was torn from the chair: it was immediately occupied by Boissy d'Anglas, who, through the whole of that perilous day, evinced the most heroic firmness of mind. Several pikes, wielded by savage hands, were directed against his breast, and, but for the intrepidity of a bystander, would have proved fatal. Féraud, with generous devotion, interposed his body to receive the blows destined for the president; he was mortally wounded, dragged out by the populace, and beheaded in the lobby. They instantly placed his head on a pike, and with savage cries re-entered the hall, bearing aloft in triumph the bloody trophy of their violence. Almost all the deputies fled in consternation; none remained excepting the friends of the revolt and Boissy d'Anglas, who, with Roman constancy, filled the chair, and, regardless of all the threats of the multitude, unceasingly protested, in the name of the Convention, against the violence with which they were assailed. They presented to him the lifeless head of Féraud on the top of the pike, and waved it before his eyes; he turned aside with emotion from the horrid spectacle: they again presented it, and he bowed with reverence before the remains of fidelity and devotion. The multitude laughed loudly, and applauded long, at the sight of the bloody head. Cries of "Bread! bread! Liberate all the patriots!" resounded for more than half an hour through

the hall, with such vehemence that no other voice could be heard. He was at length torn from the chair by the efforts of his friends; and the mob, overawed by the grandeur of his conduct, permitted him to retire without molestation. Being now undisputed masters of the Convention, the insurgents, with the aid of their associates in it, proceeded without delay to assume the government. Amidst the gloom of twilight, they named a president, got possession of all the bureaux, and, in the midst of deafening applause, passed a series of resolutions declaratory of their intentions. The most important of these were, the restoration of the Jacobin Club, the re-establishment of the democratic constitution, the recall of the exiled members, the dismissal of all the existing members of the government. A provisional administration, and a commander of the armed force, were named, and everything seemed to indicate a complete revolution.¹

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1795.

¹ Deux
Amis, xiii.
140, 141.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 341,
343. Mig.
ii. 370.
Lac. xii.
221, 223.
Th. vii. 386,
394. Hist.
de la Conv.
iv. 320, 336,
337.

But though the Convention was dissolved, the Committees still existed, and their firmness saved France. All the efforts of the insurgents to force their place of meeting were defeated by the vigour of a few companies of the national guard, and a determined band of the Troupe Dorée, who guarded the avenues to that last asylum of order and humanity. As night approached, many of the mob retired to their homes, and the troops of the sections began to assemble in force round the Committees. Encouraged by the strength of their defenders, they even returned to the seat of government, and there ventured on an open attack on the insurgents. The grenadiers of the sections advanced with fixed bayonets, the pikemen of the faubourgs stood their ground, and a bloody strife ensued in the hall and on the benches of the Convention. The opposing cries, "Vivent les Jacobins!" "Vive la Convention!" resounded from the opposite sides of the room, and success was for a few minutes doubtful. At length the insur-

31.
But are at
length de-
feated by the
Committees
and the
Troupe
Dorée.

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gents were forced back at the point of the bayonet, and a frightful mass of men and women, half of whom were intoxicated, were driven headlong, amidst frightful cries, out of the hall. At eleven o'clock Legendre made a sally, and speedily routed the surrounding multitude: they made a resistance as pusillanimous as their conduct had been violent; and the members who had fled resumed at midnight their places in the Convention. All that had been done by the rebel authority was immediately annulled; eight-and-twenty members who had supported their proceedings were put under arrest, and at five in the morning they were already five leagues from Paris. Such was the termination of this memorable revolt, which obtained the name of the insurrection of the 1st Prairial. On no former occasion had the people evinced such exasperation, or a spectacle so terrible been exhibited in the legislature. If cannon were not planted in battery against the Convention, as on the 31st May, yet the scenes in the interior of its hall were more bloody and appalling; and the victory of the populace for the time not less complete. The want of design and decision on the part of the insurgents alone made them lose the victory after they had gained it, and saved France from a return to the reign of blood.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, xiii.
144. Mig.
ii. 371.
Lac. xii. 223.
Th. vii. 395,
398. Hist.
de la Conv.
iv. 339, 344.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 351.

32.
Fresh efforts
of the Jacobins.
May 21.

But the faubourgs, though defeated, were not subdued. On the following day, the tocsin sounded in every quarter of Paris at eight o'clock in the morning; the générale beat to summon the national guard; and the Convention, little expecting to survive the day, assembled in their hall at nine. The insurgents quickly appeared in great strength; they advanced in still greater force against the Convention, and had already pointed their cannon against the place of its deliberation. The conduct of the president Legendre on this trying occasion was in the highest degree admirable. The sound of the approach of the artillery made several members start from their seats, and run towards the door. There new terrors

appeared : the cannoneers of the Convention, as soon as they saw the guns of the faubourgs charged, went over to the mob, and, both united, pointed their pieces, with the matches lighted, against the Assembly. All seemed lost : a similar defection the other way had ruined Robespierre. But, in that extremity, the conduct of the President Legendre proved the salvation of the country. "Representatives !" cried he, "remain at your posts ; be steady. Nature has destined us all to death : a little sooner or later is of trifling moment ; but an instant's vacillation would ruin you for ever." Awed by these words, they resumed their seats, and awaited in silence the enemies who surrounded the hall. Their defenders soon arrived. The Jeunesse Dorée appeared in strength : arms were distributed to thirty thousand men ; the cavalry drew around them in imposing numbers : the Sections Lepelletier and La Butte-des-moulins ranged themselves on the side of the Convention ; cannon were planted, and platoons ready to discharge on both sides. Intimidated by a resistance they had not expected, the chiefs of the insurgents paused ; and the Convention, taking advantage of their hesitation, entered into a negotiation with their leaders, who prevailed on the people to retire, after receiving the assurance that the supply of provisions for the capital should be attended to, and the laws of the constitution of 1793 enforced. The result of that day demonstrated that the physical force of the populace, however formidable, being deprived of the guidance of leaders of ability, could not contend with the permanent influence of the government when courageously directed.¹

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1795.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 366,
372. Deux
Amis, xiv.
147, 149.
Mig. ii. 372.
Hist. de la
Conv. iv.
349, 350.

Instructed by so many disasters, and such narrow escapes from utter ruin, the Convention resolved on the most decisive measures. Eleven of the most obnoxious members of the Mountain—viz., Rhul, Romme, Goujon, Duquesnoy, Duroy, Soubrani, Bourbotte, Peyssard, Forestier, Albitte, and Prieur-de-la-Marne, were delivered over to a military commission, or the ordinary tribunals,

33.
Trial and
condemna-
tion of
Romme and
the Jacobin
remnant.

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1795.

June 17.

¹ Lac. xii.
230. Mig.
ii. 373. Th.
vii. 407, 408.
Hist. de la
Conv. iv.
351. Hist.
Parl. xxxvi.
379.

by whom they were all condemned, except the three last, who escaped. Three of them, Romme, Goujon, and Duquesnoy, stabbed themselves at the bar on receiving sentence, and expired in presence of the judges ; several of the others mortally wounded themselves, and were led, still bleeding, to the scaffold. They all died with a stoical firmness, so often displayed during those days of anarchy, by the victims of political worse than any religious fanaticism. Barère, Collot d'Herbois, Billaud Varennes, and Vadier, were ordered to be tried by the criminal tribunal of Charente-Inferieure ; but before the decree arrived at Rochefort, they had all, except Barère, been transported or escaped.¹

34.

Condemna-
tion of Fé-
raud's mur-
derer. Dis-
arming of
the Fau-
bourg-St-
Antoine,
and termi-
nation of the
reign of the
multitude.
May 24.

At length the period had arrived when the faubourgs, whose revolts had so often proved fatal to the tranquillity of France, were to be finally subdued. The murderer of the deputy Féraud had been discovered, and condemned by a military commission. When the day of his punishment approached, the Convention, to prevent another revolt, ordered the disarming of the faubourgs. A band of the most intrepid of the Troupe Dorée imprudently advanced into that thickly-peopled quarter ; and, after seizing some guns, found themselves surrounded by its immense population. They owed their safety to the humanity or prudence of the leaders of the revolt, who hesitated to imbrue their hands in the blood of the best families of Paris. But no sooner were they permitted to retire, than the national guard, thirty thousand strong, supported by four thousand troops of the line, surrounded the revolutionary quarter ; the avenues leading to it were planted with cannon, and mortars disposed on conspicuous situations to terrify the inhabitants into submission. Alarmed at the prospect of a bombardment, by which their property would have been endangered, the master manufacturers, and chiefs of the revolt, had a conference, at which it was resolved to make an unconditional surrender. They submitted without restriction to the

terms of the Convention. Their cannon were taken from them, the artillerymen disbanded; the revolutionary committees suppressed; the constitution of 1793 abolished; and the formidable pikes, which since the 14th July 1789 had so often struck terror into Paris, finally given up. Shortly after, the military force was taken out of the hands of the populace. The national guards were organised on a new footing; the workmen, the valets, the indigent citizens, were excluded from their ranks; and the new members, regularly organised by battalions and brigades, were subjected to the orders of the Military Committee. At the same time, in accordance with an earnest petition from the few remaining Catholics, they were permitted to make use of the churches, on condition of maintaining them at their own expense.¹

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¹ Deux
Amis, xiii.
150, 153.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 206,
207.

Thus TERMINATED THE REIGN OF THE MULTITUDE, six years after it had been first established by the storming of the Bastille. From the period of their being disarmed, the populace took no further share in the changes of government; these were brought about solely by the middle classes and the army. It is the *arming* of the people in troubled times which is the fatal step; for it at once renders the mob of the capital the masters of the state. After the populace were disarmed, the grand source of disorder and suffering was closed. The Revolution, considered as a movement of the people, was thereafter at an end; the subsequent struggles were merely the contests of other powers for the throne which they had made vacant.²

May 24.
² Mig. ii. 373.
Th. vii. 410,
420. Lac.
xii. 227.
Toul. v. 260,
261. Hist.
de la Conv.
iv. 351, 352.

The gradual relaxation of the extraordinary rigour of government erected by the Convention presents an interesting epoch in the history of the Revolution.

After the overthrow of Robespierre, the Convention endeavoured to retrace their steps towards the natural order of society; but they experienced the utmost

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35.

Measures of
the Conven-
tion after
the fall of
Robes-
pierre.

difficulty in the attempt. To go on with the maximum, forced requisitions, and general distribution of food, was impossible ; but how to relax these extreme measures was the question, when the general industry of the country was so grievously reduced, and the usual supplies so much straitened, both by the abstraction of agricultural labourers, the terror excited by the requisitionists, and the forced sales at a nominal and ruinous price. The first step towards a return to the natural state was an augmentation of the price fixed as a maximum by two-thirds, and a limitation of the right of making forced requisitions. But these oppressive exactions were in fact abandoned by the reaction in the public feeling, and the cessation of terror, after the fall of the Dictatorial government. The assignats going on continually declining, the aversion of all the industrial classes to the maximum was constantly increasing, because the losses they sustained through the forced sales were thereby daily augmented ; and the persons intrusted with the administration of the laws, being of a more moderate and humane character, were averse to have recourse to the sanguinary means which still remained at their disposal. Thus there was everywhere in France a general endeavour to elude the maximum, and the newly constituted authorities winked at frauds which they felt to be the necessary consequence of so unjust a law. No one, during the Reign of Terror, ventured openly to resist regulations which rendered the industrial and commercial classes tributary to the soldiers and the multitude ; but when the danger of the guil-
lotine was at an end, the reaction against them was irresistible.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, xiii.
137, 139.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 207.
Mig. ii. 402.
Hist. de la
Conv. iv.
257, 258.
Th. vii. 66,
139, 224,
225.

36.
Reaction
against the
violent mea-
sures of the
Reign of
Terror.

Many months had not elapsed, after the 9th Thermidor, before the total abolition of the maximum and forced requisitions was demanded in the Convention. Public feeling revolted against their continuance, and they were put an end to almost by acclamation. The powers of the Committee of Subsistence and Provisions were greatly

circumscribed; the right of making forced requisitions was continued only for a month, and its army of ten thousand employés restricted to a few hundred. At the same time, the free circulation of gold and silver, which had been arrested by the Revolutionary government, was again permitted. The inextricable question of the assignats next occupied the attention of the Convention; for the suffering produced by their depreciation had become absolutely intolerable to a large portion of the people. Being still a legal tender at par, all those who had money to receive lost eleven-twelfths of their property. The salaries of the public functionaries, and the payments to the public creditors, were to a certain degree augmented, but by no means in proportion to the depreciation of the paper. But this was a trifling remedy; the great evil still remained unmitigated in all payments between man and man over the whole country.¹

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvi, 83,
112. Th.
vii. 236, 240.
Rapport de
Lindet sur
la situation
intérieure
de la Rep.

The only way of withdrawing the assignats from circulation, and in consequence enhancing their value, was by the sale of the national domains, when, according to the theory of their formation, they should be retired by government, and destroyed. But how were purchasers to be found? That was the eternal question which constantly recurred, and never could be answered. The same national convulsion which had confiscated two-thirds of the land of France belonging to the emigrants, the clergy, and the crown, had destroyed almost all the capital which could be employed in its purchase. Sales to any considerable extent were thus totally out of the question, the more especially as the estates thus brought all at once to sale, consisted in great part of sumptuous palaces, woods, parks, and other domains, in circumstances, of all others, the worst adopted for a division among the industrial classes. It was not the capitals of a few shopkeepers and farmers which had escaped the general wreck that could produce any impression on such immense possessions. The difficulty, in truth, was inextricable.² No sales to any

37.
Inextricable
difficulty in
contracting
the assign-
nats.

² Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 212.
Th. vii. 241,
242. Mig. ii.
403.

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extent went on : the assignats were continually increasing with the vast expenditure of government : and at length it was got over, as will appear in the sequel, by forced means, and the proclamation of a national bankruptcy of the very worst kind.

38.
Dreadful
scarcity in
Paris from
the abolition
of the forced
requisitions.

March 24.

But the attention of the Convention was soon drawn to evils of a still more pressing kind. The abolition of the maximum and of the forced requisitions, had deprived government of its violent means of feeding the citizens, while, in consequence of the shock which these tyrannical proceedings had given to industry, the usual sources of supply were almost dried up. The consequence was a most severe scarcity of every kind of provisions, which went on increasing during the whole of the winter of 1794-5, and at length, in March 1795, reached the most alarming height. To the natural evils of famine were superadded the horrors of a winter of uncommon severity, such as had not been experienced in Europe for a hundred years. The roads, covered with ice, soon became impassable for carriages ; the canals were frozen up ; and the means of subsistence to the metropolis seemed to be totally exhausted. In this extremity every family endeavoured to lay in stores for a few days, and the few convoys which approached Paris were besieged by crowds of famishing citizens, who proceeded twenty and thirty miles to anticipate the ordinary supplies. Nothing remained for government, who still adhered, though with weakened powers, to the system of distributing food to the people, but to diminish the rations daily issued ; and on the report of Boissy d'Anglas, the quantity served out from the public magazines was diminished to one-half, or a pound of bread a-day for each person above the working classes, and a pound and a half to those actually engaged in labour.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, xiv.
99, 108.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 261.
Th. vii. 246,
248. Lac,
xii. 192.

At this rate, there was daily distributed to the six hundred and thirty-six thousand inhabitants of the capital eighteen hundred and ninety-seven casks of flour. But

small as this quantity was, it was soon found necessary to reduce it still further; and at length, for several weeks, each citizen received only *two ounces* of black and coarse bread a-day. Small as this pittance was, it could be obtained only by soliciting tickets from the committees of government, and after waiting at the doors of the bakers from eleven at night till seven in the morning, during the rigour of an arctic winter. The citizens of Paris were for months exposed to the horrors of a state of siege; numbers perished of famine, and many owed their existence to the kindness of some friend in the country, and the introduction of the potato, which already began to assuage this artificial, as it has so often since done the most severe natural scarcities.¹

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1795.

39.
Miserable
fare and suf-
ferings of
the people.¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 260,
261. Th.vii.
246, 252.
Lac.xii. 191,
193. Deux
Amis, xiv.
24, 26.

The abolition of the maximum, of the requisitions, and of all the forced methods of procuring supplies, produced, as might have been anticipated, a most violent reaction on the price of every article of consumption, and, by consequence, on the value of the assignats. Foreign commerce having begun to revive with the cessation of the Reign of Terror, sales being no longer forced, the assignat was brought into comparison with the currency of other countries, and its enormous inferiority precipitated still further its fall. The rapidity of its decline gave rise to numerous speculations on the Exchange of Paris; and the people, in the midst of the horrors of famine, were exasperated by the sight of fortunes made out of the misery which they endured. Government, to provide for the necessities of the inhabitants, had no other resource but to increase the issue of assignats for the purchase of provisions; three milliards more of francs (£120,000,000) were issued for this necessary purpose, and the consequence was, that the paper-money fell almost to nothing. Bread was exposed for sale at twenty-two francs the pound in assignats, and what formerly cost 100 francs was now raised to 4000. In the course of the year the depreciation became such, that 28,000 francs in paper

40.
Enormous
depreciation
in the value
of the assign-
ats, and
public de-
spair in con-
sequence.

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XIX.

1795.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 261.
Deux Amis,
xiv. 28, 29.
Th. vii. 376,
381. Lac.
xiii. 40.

were exchanged for a louis d'or, and a dinner for five or six persons cost 60,000 francs in assignats. A kind of despair seized every mind at such prodigious and apparently interminable losses ; and it was the force of this feeling which produced the great revolts already mentioned, which had so nearly proved fatal to the Thermidorians, and restored the whole forced system of the Reign of Terror.¹

41.
Changes in
the laws.
June and
July.

The overthrow of this insurrection led to several laws which powerfully tended to diminish the destructive ascendancy of the people in the government. The national guards, as already mentioned, were reorganised on the footing on which they been before the 10th August ; the labouring and poorer classes were excluded, and the service was confined to the more substantial citizens. At Paris this important force was placed under the orders of the military committee. The government got quit at the same time of a burdensome and ruinous custom, which the Convention had borrowed from the Athenian democracy, of allowing every indigent citizen fifty sous a-day, while they were engaged at their respective sections—a direct premium on idleness, and a constant inducement to the turbulent and restless to assemble at these great centres of democratic power. The churches were restored to the anxious wishes of the Catholics, on the condition that they should maintain them themselves—the first symptom of a return to religious feeling in that infidel age.²

² Th. vii.
419, 420.
Lac. xiii. 43.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvii. 1,
12.

42.
Unsuccess-
ful mea-
sures of the
government
to arrest the
evil.

All the evils, the necessary result of an excessive and forced paper-circulation, went on increasing after the government, which had returned to moderate measures, was installed in power. Subsistence was constantly wanting in the great towns ; the treasury was empty of all but assignats ; the great bulk of the national domains remained unsold ; the transactions, debts, and properties of individuals were involved in inextricable confusion. Sensible of the necessity of doing something for those who were paid in the government paper, the Directory

adopted a scale by which the assignats were taken as worth a fifth of their nominal value ; but this was an inconsiderable relief, as they had fallen to a *hundred-and-fiftieth* part of the sum for which they had been originally issued. The consequence of this excessive depreciation in a paper which was still a legal tender was, that the whole debts of individuals were extinguished by a payment worth nothing ; that the income of the fundholders was annihilated ; and the state itself, compelled to receive its own paper in payment of the taxes, found the treasury filled with a mass of sterile assignats. But for the half of the land-tax, which was received in kind, the government would have been literally without the means of feeding either Paris or the armies. The excess of the paper-circulation had rendered it valueless, and in effect reduced the transactions of men to barter.¹

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1795.

Deux
Amis, xiv.
28, 29. Hist.
Parl. xxxvii.
12, 36. Th.
viii. 85, 86.
Lac. xiii. 32,
36.

Hitherto the reaction had been in favour of constitutional and moderate measures ; but the last great victory over the Jacobins revived the hopes of the Royalists. The emigrants and the clergy had returned in great numbers since the repeal of the severe laws passed against them during the Reign of Terror, and contributed powerfully to incline the public mind to a moderate and constitutional monarchy. The horror excited by the sanguinary proceedings of the Jacobins was so strong and universal, that the reaction naturally was in favour of a royalist government. The recent successes of the Troupe Dorée, who formed the flower of the youth of Paris, had awakened in them a strong *esprit de corps*, and prepared the great and inert body of the people to follow a banner which had so uniformly led to victory. So strong was the feeling at that period, from recent and grievous experience of the danger of popular tumults, that, after the disarming of the faubourgs, several sections made a voluntary surrender of their artillery to the government. A large body of troops of the line, supported by a considerable train of artillery,

43.
Further
progress of
humane
measures,
and abolition
of the
Revolution-
ary Tribunal.

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

June 17.
1 Toul. v.
263, 270.
Th. viii. 20,
21. Hist.
Parl. xxxvii.
66, 75.

was brought to Paris, and encamped in the plain of Sablons; and the galleries of the Convention were closed except to persons having tickets of admission. The language of the deputations of the sections at its bar became openly hostile to the dominion of the people, and such as would a few months earlier have been a sure passport to the scaffold. "Experience," said the deputies of the section Lepelletier, "has taught us that the despotism of the people is as insupportable as the tyranny of kings." The Revolutionary Tribunal, at the same period, was abolished by a decree of the Convention. A journal of the day observed, "Such was the tranquil and bloodless end of the most atrocious institution of which, since the Council of Blood, established by the Duke of Alva in the Low Countries, the history of tribunals, instruments of injustice, has preserved the remembrance."¹

44.
Formation
of a new
constitu-
tion.

During this revolution of public opinion, the Convention was engaged in the formation of a constitution. It is in the highest degree both curious and instructive to contemplate the altered doctrines which prevailed after the consequences of popular government had been experienced, and how generally men reverted to those principles which, in the commencement of the Revolution, were stigmatised as slavish and disgraceful. Boissy d'Anglas was chosen to make a report upon the form of the constitution; his memoir contains much important truth, which preceding events had forced upon the observation of mankind. "Hitherto," said he, "the efforts of France have been solely directed to destroy; at present, when we are neither silenced by the oppression of tyrants, nor intimidated by the cries of demagogues, we must turn to our advantage the crimes of the monarchy, the errors of the Assembly, the horrors of the Decemviral tyranny, the calamities of anarchy. Absolute equality is a chimera; virtue, talents, physical or intellectual powers, are not equally distributed by nature. Property alone attaches the citizen to his

country ; all who are to have any share in the legislature should be possessed of some independent income. All Frenchmen are citizens ; but the state of domestic service, pauperism, or the non-payment of taxes, forbid the great majority from exercising their rights. The executive government requires a central position, a disposable force, a display calculated to strike the vulgar. The people should never be permitted to deliberate indiscriminately on public affairs ; a populace constantly deliberating rapidly perishes by misery and disorder ; the laws should never be submitted to the consideration of the multitude." Such were the principles ultimately adopted by the Revolutionary Assembly of France. In a few years, centuries of experience had been acquired.¹

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1795.

¹ Rapport de Boissy d'Anglas sur la Constitution. Toul. v. 272, 273. Hist. Parl. xxxvii. 34.

If such was the language of the Convention, it may easily be conceived how much more powerful was the reaction among the middle classes of the people. The national guard, and the Jeunesse Dorée of several sections, had become open Royalists. They wore the green and black uniform which distinguished the Chouans of the western provinces ; the Réveil du Peuple was beginning to awaken the dormant, not extinguished, loyalty of the French people. The name of *Terrorist* had become in many places the signal for proscriptions as perilous as that of *Aristocrat* had formerly been. In the south, especially, the reaction was terrible. Bands, bearing the names of the " Companies of Jesus," and the " Companies of the Sun," traversed the country, executing the most dreadful reprisals upon the revolutionary party. At Lyons, Aix, Tarascon, and Marseilles, they massacred the prisoners without either trial or discrimination ; the 2d of September was repeated, with all its horrors, in most of the prisons of the south of France. At Lyons, after the first massacre of the Terrorists, they pursued the wretches through the streets, and when any one was seized, he was instantly thrown into the Rhone ; at Tarascon, the captives were cast headlong from the top

45.
General abandonment of democratic principles from the force of experience, and violent reaction in the south of France.

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1795.

¹ Deux
Amis, xiv.
41, 50. Hist.
Parl. xxxvi.
417, 433.
Lac. xii. 210.
Mig. ii. 382.
Fréron, 9,
32, 73.

of a lofty rock into that rapid stream. One prison at Lyons was set on fire by the infuriated mob, and the unhappy inmates all perished in the flames. The people, exasperated by the blood which had been shed by the revolutionary party, were insatiable in their vengeance; they invoked the name of a parent, brother, or sister, when retaliating on their oppressors; and, while committing murder themselves, exclaimed, with every stroke, "Die, assassins!" History must equally condemn such horrors by whomsoever committed; but it must reserve its severest censure for those by whom they were *first* perpetrated.¹

46.
Generous
conduct of
the Duke
of Orleans'
younger
sons, and
indulgence
shown to
the Jacobins.

Many innocent persons perished, as in all popular tumults, during those bloody days. The two younger sons of the Duke of Orleans, the Duke de Montpensier, and the Count Beaujoulais, were confined in the Fort of St John at Marseilles, where they had been forgotten during the Reign of Terror. On the 6th June, a terrible noise round the fort announced the approach of the frantic multitude. The cries of the victims in the adjoining cells too soon informed them of the danger which they ran; Royalists and Jacobins were indiscriminately murdered by the bloody assassins. Isnard and Cardroi at length put a stop to the massacres, but not before eighty persons had been put to death. The former, though he strove to moderate the savage measures of the Royalists, increased their fury by the fearful energy of his language. "We want arms," said the young men who were marching against the Jacobins of Toulon. "Take," said he, "the bones of your fathers to march against their murderers." The fate of these young princes was in the highest degree interesting. Some months afterwards they formed a plan of escape; but the Duke de Montpensier, in descending the wall of the fort, broke his leg, was seized, and reconducted to prison. He consoled himself for his failure by the thoughts that his brother had succeeded, when he beheld him re-enter the cell, and fall

upon his neck. Escaped from danger, and on the point of embarking on board a vessel destined for the United States, he had heard of the misfortune of his brother, and, unable to endure freedom without him, he had returned to prison to share his fate. They were both subsequently liberated, and reached America; but they soon died, the victims of a long and severe captivity of four years. During the predominance of these principles, upwards of eighty Jacobins were denounced in the Convention, and escaped execution only by secreting themselves in different parts of France. The only secure asylum which they found was in the houses of the Royalists whom, during the days of their power, they had saved from the scaffold. Not one was betrayed by those to whom they fled. So predominant was the influence of the Girondists, that Louvet obtained a decree, ordering an expiatory fête for the victims of 31st May. None of the Thermidorians ventured to resist the proposal, though many amongst them had contributed in no inconsiderable degree to their fate.¹

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¹ Lac. xii.
212, 216,
231. Deux
Amis, xv.
44, 49.

About the same time, the infant King of France, Louis XVII., expired. The 9th Thermidor came too late to save the life of this unfortunate prince. His savage jailer, Simon, was indeed beheaded, and a less cruel tyrant substituted in his place; but the temper of the times would not at first admit of any decided measures of indulgence in favour of the heir to the throne. The barbarous treatment he had experienced from Simon, had alienated his reason, but not extinguished his feelings of gratitude. On one occasion, that inhuman wretch had seized him by the hair, and threatened to dash his head against the wall; the surgeon, Naulin, interfered to prevent him, and the unhappy child next day presented him with two pears, which had been given him for his supper the preceding evening, lamenting, at the same time, that he had no other means of testifying his gratitude. Simon and Hébert had put him to the torture, to extract from

47.
Last days
and death
of Louis
XVII. in
prison, and
liberation of
the Duchess
d'Angoulême.

CHAP.
XIX.

1795.

June 8.

June 18.

¹ Lac. xii.
369, 374,
383. Deux
Amis, xiv.
172, 173.

48.
Continued
captivity of
Lafayette,
and general
interest in
his behalf.

him an avowal of crimes connected with his mother, which he was too young to understand ; after that cruel day, he almost always preserved silence, lest his words should prove fatal to some of his relations. This resolution, and the closeness of his confinement, soon preyed upon his health. In February 1795, he was seized with a fever, and visited by three members of the Committee of General Salvation : they found him sitting at a little table, making castles of cards. They addressed to him words of kindness, but could not obtain any answer. In May, the state of his health became so alarming, that the celebrated surgeon Dessault was directed by the Convention to visit him ; his generous attentions assuaged the sufferings of his latter days, but could not prolong his life : he soon after died in prison. The public sympathy was so strongly excited by this event, that it induced the Convention to consent to the freedom of the remaining child of Louis XVI. On the 18th of June, the Duchess d'Angoulême was liberated from the Temple, and exchanged for the four Commissioners whom Dumourier had delivered up to the Austrians. She had owed her life, during the ascendancy of Robespierre, to a project which he was revolving in his mind, of marrying that unhappy princess, and thus uniting in his person the Revolutionary and Royalist parties.¹*

The fate of Lafayette, Latour Maubourg, and other eminent men who were detained in the Austrian prisons, since their defection from the armies of France, at this time excited the most ardent sympathy both in France and Great Britain. They had been rigorously guarded since their captivity in the fortress of Olmutz ; and the humane in every part of the world beheld with regret men who had voluntarily delivered themselves up, to avoid the excesses of a sanguinary faction, treated with more

* " Dans ces tems cette jeune infortunée n'avait dû son salut qu'à l'ambition de Robespierre ; et si sous le Règne de la Terreur elle n'avait point suivie sa famille à l'échafaud, c'est que ce monstre avait des vues sur elle, et se promettait de l'épouser pour affermir sa puissance."—*Deux Amis*, xiv. 173.

severity than prisoners of war. Mr Fox in vain endeavoured to induce the British government to interfere in their behalf; the reply of Mr Pitt in the House of Commons equalled the speech of his eloquent rival, and nothing followed from the attempt. The wife and daughters of Lafayette, finding all attempts at his deliverance ineffectual, generously resolved to share his captivity; and they remained in confinement with him at Olmutz, till the victories of Buonaparte in 1796 compelled the Austrian government to consent to their liberation. His imprisonment, however tedious, was probably the means of saving his life; it is hardly possible that in France he could have survived the Reign of Terror, or escaped the multitude which he had roused to revolution, and to whom he had long been the object of execration.¹

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1795.

¹ Lac. x. 386,
387.

Meanwhile, the Convention proceeded rapidly with the formation of the new constitution. This was the *third* which had been imposed upon the French people during the space of a few years—a sufficient proof of the danger of incautiously overturning long-established institutions. But the constitution of 1795 was very different from those which had preceded it, and gave striking proof of the altered condition of the public mind on the state of political affairs. Experience had now taught all classes that the chimera of perfect equality could not be attained; that the mass of the people are unfit for the exercise of political rights; that the contests of factions terminate, if the people are victorious, in the supremacy of the most depraved. The constitution which was framed under the influence of these sentiments differed widely both from that struck out during the glowing fervour of 1789, and that conceived amid the democratic transports of 1793. The ruinous error was now acknowledged of uniting the whole legislative powers in one Assembly, and enacting the most important laws, without the intervention of any time to deliberate on their tendency, or recover from the excitement under which they may have originated. Guided by

49.
Completion
of the new
constitution.

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XIX.

1795.

experience, France reversed its former judgment on the union of the orders in 1789, which had brought about the Revolution. The legislative power, therefore, was divided between two Councils, that of the *Five Hundred* and that of the *Ancients*. The Council of Five Hundred was intrusted with the sole right of originating laws; that of the *Ancients* with the power of passing or rejecting them; and, to insure the prudent discharge of this duty, no person could be a member of it till he had reached the age of forty years. No bill could pass till after it had been three times read, with an interval between each reading of at least five days.¹

¹ Mig. ii.
385. Toul.
v. 404. Th.
viii. 13.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvi. 485,
500.

50.

The constitution of the Directory.

The executive power, instead of being vested as heretofore in two committees, was lodged in the hands of five directors, nominated by the Council of Five Hundred, approved by that of the *Ancients*. They were liable to be impeached for their misconduct by the Councils. Each individual was by rotation to be president during three months; and every year a fifth new Director was to be chosen, in lieu of one who was bound to retire. The Directory thus constituted had the entire disposal of the army and finances, the appointment of public functionaries, and the management of all public negotiations. They were lodged during the period of their official duty in the palace of the Luxembourg, and attended by a guard of honour. The privilege of electing members for the legislature was taken away from the great body of the people, and confined to the colleges of delegates. The meetings where these delegates were appointed were called the *Primary Assemblies*; and, in order to insure the influence of the middle ranks, the persons elected by the *Primary Assemblies* were themselves the electors of the members of the legislature. All popular societies were interdicted, and the press declared absolutely free.²

² Hist. Parl.
xxxvii. 485,
494. Mig.
ii. 385, 387.
Th. vii. 14,
15. Toul. v.
399.

It is of importance to recollect that this constitution, so cautiously framed to exclude the direct influence of the people, and curb the excess of popular licentiousness, was

the voluntary work of the very Convention which had come into power under the democratic constitution of 1793, and immediately *after* the 10th August; which had voted the death of the king, the condemnation of the Girondists, and the execution of Danton; which had supported the bloody excesses of the Decemvirs, and survived the horrors of the reign of Robespierre. Let it no longer be said, therefore, that the evils of popular rule are imaginary dangers, contradicted by the experience of mankind. The checks thus imposed upon the power of the people were the work of their own delegates, chosen by universal suffrage during a period of unexampled public excitation, whose proceedings had been marked by a more violent love of freedom than any that ever existed from the beginning of the world. Nothing can speak so strongly in favour of the necessity of controlling the people as the work of the representatives whom they had themselves chosen, without exception, under the influence of the most vehement excitement, to confirm their power.

The formation of this constitution, and its discussion in the assemblies of the people, to which it was submitted for consideration, excited the most violent agitation throughout France. Paris, as usual, took the lead. Its forty-eight sections were incessantly assembled, and the public effervescence resembled that of 1789. This was brought to its height by a decree of the Convention, declaring that *two-thirds* of the present legislature should form a part of the new legislature, and that the electors should only fill up the remaining part. The citizens beheld with horror so large a proportion of a body, whose proceedings had deluged France with blood, still destined to reign over them. To accept the constitution, and reject this decree, seemed the only way of getting free from their domination.¹ The Thermidorian party had been entirely excluded from the Committee of *Eleven*, to whom the formation of the new constitution was intrusted,

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XIX.

1795.

51.

Reflections
on this con-
stitution.

52.

Great agi-
tation in
Paris, and
throughout
France, at
these
changes.

¹ Delib. de
l'Assemblée
Prim. de
Lepelletier,
Sept. 7.
Hist. Parl.
xxxvii. 20,
21. Toul.
v. 327, 328,
330. Th.
viii. 16, 19.
Mig. ii. 368,
389. Lac.
xii. 402, 403.

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and in revenge they joined the assemblies of those who sought to counteract the ambition of the Convention. The focus of the effervescence was the section Lepelletier, formerly known by the name of that of the *Filles-St-Thomas*, the richest and most powerful in Paris, which, through all the changes of the Revolution, had steadily adhered to Royalist principles.

53.
Coalition of
Royalists
with sec-
tions of
national
guard.

The Royalist committee of Paris, of which Le Maître was the known agent, which had still existed through all the horrors of the Revolution, finding matters brought to this crisis, coalesced with the journals and the leaders of the sections. They openly accused the Convention of attempting to perpetuate its power, and of aiming at usurping the sovereignty of the people. The orators of the sections said at its bar, "Deserve our choice, do not seek to command it; you have exercised an authority without bounds; you have united in yourselves all the powers—those of making laws, of revising them, of changing them, of executing them. Recollect how fatal military despotism was to the Roman republic." The press of Paris teemed with pamphlets, inveighing against the ambitious views of the legislature; and the efforts of the sections were incessant to defeat their projects. The agitation of 1789 was renewed, but it was all now on the other side; the object now was, not to restrain the tyranny of the court, but to repress the ambition of the delegates of the people.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvii. 23,
27. Lac. xii.
404. Toul.
v. 331, 333.
Th. viii. 20,
22, 23. Mig.
ii. 389.

54.
Vehement
Royalist
declama-
tions at the
sections.

"Will the Convention," said the Royalist orators, "never be satisfied? Is a reign of three years, fraught with more crimes than the whole annals of twenty other nations, not sufficient for those who rose into power under the auspices of the 10th August and the 2d September? Is that power fit to repose under the shadow of the laws, which has only lived in tempests? Let us not be deceived by the 9th Thermidor; the bay of Quiberon, where Tallien bore so conspicuous a part, may show us that the thirst for blood is not extinguished, even among

those who overthrew Robespierre. The Convention has done nothing but destroy : shall we now intrust it with the work of conservation ? What reliance can be placed on the monstrous coalition between the proscribers and the proscribed ? Irreconcilable enemies to each other, they have only entered into this semblance of alliance in order to resist those who hate them—that is, every man in France. It is we ourselves who have forced upon them those acts of tardy humanity on which they now rely as a veil to their monstrous proceedings. But for our warm representations, the members *hors la loi* would still have been wandering in exile, the seventy-three deputies still languishing in prison. Who but ourselves formed the faithful guard which saved them from the terrible faubourgs, to whom they had basely yielded their best members on the 31st May ? They now call upon us to select among its ranks those who should continue members, and form the two-thirds of the new Assembly. Can two-thirds of the Convention be found who are not stained with blood ? Can we ever forget that many of its basest acts passed *unanimously*, and that a majority of three hundred and sixty-one concurred in a vote which will be an eternal subject of mourning to France ? Shall we admit a majority of regicides into the new Assembly, intrust our liberty to cowards, our fortunes to the authors of so many acts of rapine, our lives to murderers ? The Convention is only strong because it mixes up its crimes with the glories of our armies. Let us separate them ; let us leave the Convention its sins, and our soldiers their triumphs, and the world will speedily do justice to both.”¹

¹ Lac. xii
406, 409.

Such discourses, incessantly repeated from the tribunes of forty-eight sections, violently shook the public mind in the capital. To give greater publicity to their opinions, the orators repeated the same sentiments in addresses at the bar of the Convention, which were immediately circulated with rapidity through the departments. The effervescence

55.
Extremo
agitation
at Paris.

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in the south was at its height ; many important cities and departments seemed already disposed to imitate the sections of the metropolis. The towns of Dreux and Chartres warmly seconded their wishes ; the sections of Orleans sent the following message :—" Primary assemblies of Paris, Orleans is at your side ; it advances on the same line ; let your cry be resistance to oppression, hatred to usurpers, and we will second you." The national guard of Paris shared in the general excitement. The bands of the Jeunesse Dorée had inspired its members with part of their own exultation of feeling, and diminished much of their wonted timidity. Resistance to the tyrants was openly spoken of ; the Convention compared to the Long Parliament which shed the blood of Charles I. ; and the assistance of a monk ardently looked for, to consummate the work of restoration.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvii. 14,
34. Lac.
xii. 414.
Th. viii.
22, 23.

56.
The Con-
vention
throw them-
selves on the
army.

Surrounded by so many dangers, the Convention did not abate of its former energy. They had lost the Jacobins by their proscriptions, the Royalists by their ambition. What remained ? THE ARMY : and this terrible engine they resolved to employ, as the only means of prolonging their power. They lost no time in submitting the constitution to the soldiers, and by them it was unanimously adopted. Military men, accustomed to obey, and to take the lead from others, usually, except in periods of uncommon excitement, adopt any constitution which is recommended to them by their officers. The officers, all raised during the fervour of 1793, and in great part strangers to the horrors which had alienated so large a part of the population of Paris from the Revolution, eagerly supported a constitution which promised to continue the régime under which they had risen to the stations they now occupied. A body of five thousand regular troops was assembled in the neighbourhood of Paris, and their adhesion to the constitution eagerly announced to the citizens.² The Convention called to their support the Prætorian guards ; they

² Lac. xii.
414, 415.
Th. viii. 35,
36. Mig. ii.
390.

little thought how soon they were to receive from them a master.

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It soon appeared that not only the armies, but a large majority of the departments, had accepted the constitution. The inhabitants of Paris, however, accustomed to take the lead in all public measures, were not discouraged; the section Lepelletier unanimously passed a resolution, "That the powers of every constituted authority ceased in presence of the assembled people;" and a provisional government, under the name of a Central Committee, was established under the auspices of its leaders. A majority of the sections adopted their resolution, which was immediately annulled by the Convention, and their decree was, in its turn, reversed by the Assemblies of the Electors. The contest now became open between the sections and the legislature; the former separated the constitution from the decrees ordaining the re-election of two-thirds of the old Assembly; they accepted the former, and rejected the latter. On the 3d October (11 Vendémiaire), it was resolved by the sections, that the electors chosen by the people should be assembled at the Théâtre Français, under protection of the national guard; and on that day they were conducted there by an armed force of chasseurs and grenadiers. The danger of an insurrection against a government, having at its command the military force of France, was apparent; but the enthusiasm of the moment overbalanced all other considerations.¹

1795.

57.

The sections
openly re-
solve to
revolt.

Oct. 2.

Oct. 3.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvii. 27,
33. Mig. ii.
390, 391.
Lac. xii. 415.
Th. viii. 26,
29, 30. Hist.
de la Conv.
iv. 368, 369.

On the one side it was urged, "Are we about to consecrate, by our example, that odious principle of insurrection which so many bloody days have rendered hateful? Our enemies alone are skilled in revolts; the art of exciting them is unknown to us. The multitude is indifferent to our cause; deprived of their aid, how can we face the government? If they join our ranks, how shall we restrain their sanguinary excesses? Should we prove victorious, what dynasty shall we establish? What

58.

Meeting of
the electors
at the
Théâtre
Français,
when resist-
ance is re-
solved on.

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XIX.
1795.

chiefs can we present to the armies? Is there not too much reason to fear that success would only revive divisions now happily forgotten, and give our enemies the means of profiting by our discord?" But to this it was replied,—“Honour forbids us to recede; duty calls upon us to restore freedom to our country, his throne to our monarch. We may now, by seizing the decisive moment, accomplish that which former patriots sought in vain to achieve. The 9th Thermidor only destroyed a tyrant; now tyranny itself is to be overthrown. If our names are now obscure, they will no longer remain so; we shall acquire a glory of which even the brave Vendéans shall be envious. Let us Dare: that is the watchword in revolutions—may it for once be employed on the side of order and freedom. The Convention will never forgive our outrages; the revolutionary tyranny, curbed for more than a year by our exertions, will rise up with renewed vigour for our destruction, if we do not anticipate its vengeance by delivering ourselves.” Moved by these considerations, the sections unanimously resolved upon resistance. The national guard amounted to above thirty thousand men—but it was totally destitute of artillery, the sections having, in the belief that they were no longer required, delivered up the pieces with which they had been furnished in 1789, upon the final disarming of the insurgent faubourgs. Their want was now severely felt, as the Convention had fifty pieces at their command, stationed at Sablons near Paris, whose terrible efficacy had been abundantly proved on the 10th August; and the cannoneers who were to serve them were the same who had broken the lines of Prince Cobourg. The national guard hoped, by a rapid advance, to capture this formidable train of artillery, and then the victory was secure.¹

¹ Lac. xii.
391, 419.

The leaders of the Convention, on their side, were not idle. In the evening of the 3d October (11 Vendémiaire), a decree was passed, ordering the immediate

dissolution of the electoral bodies in Paris, and embodying into a regiment fifteen hundred of the Jacobins, many of whom were liberated from the prisons for that especial purpose. These measures brought matters to a crisis between the sections and the government. This decree was openly resisted, and the national guard having assembled in force to protect the electors at the Théâtre Français, the Convention ordered the military to disperse them. General Menou was appointed commander of the armed force, and he advanced with the troops of the line to surround the Convent of the Filles-St-Thomas, the centre of the insurrection, where the section Lepelletier was assembled. Menou, however, had not the decision requisite for success in civil contests. Instead of attacking the insurgents, he entered into a negotiation with them, and retired in the evening without having effected anything. His failure gave all the advantages of a victory to the sections; the national guard mustered in greater strength than ever, and resolved to attack the Convention at its place of assembly on the following day. Informed of this failure, and the dangerous excitement which it had produced in Paris, the Convention, at eleven at night, dismissed General Menou, and gave the command of the armed force, with unlimited powers, to General Barras. He immediately demanded the assistance, as second in command, of a young officer of artillery, who had distinguished himself at the siege of Toulon and in the war in the Maritime Alps—
 NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.¹

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59.

Measures
of the Con-
vention.
Failure of
Menou, and
appoint-
ment of
Buonaparte.
Oct. 3.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvii. 37,
39. Mig. ii.
391, 392.
Lac. xii.
421, 434.
Th. viii. 35,
39. Deux
Amis, xiii.
374, 385.

This young officer was immediately introduced to the Committee. His manner was timid and embarrassed; the career of public life was as yet new; but his clear and distinct opinions, the energy and force of his language, already indicated the powers of his mind. By his advice, the powerful train of artillery in the plain of Sablons, consisting of fifty pieces, was immediately brought by a lieutenant, afterwards well known in military annals,

60.

His decisive
measure in
seizing the
artillery.

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¹ Deux

Amis, xiii.

383, 391.

Mig. ii. 393.

Nap. ii. 267,

and iii. 70,

74. Th. viii.

40, 41, 42.

Hist. de la

Conv. iv.

383.

61.
Combat
round the
Tuileries.
Defeat of the
sections.

named MURAT, to the capital, and disposed in such a position as to command all the avenues to the Convention. Early on the following morning, the neighbourhood of the Tuileries resembled a great intrenched camp. The line of defence extended from the Pont-Neuf, along the quays of the river to the Pont-Louis XVI. : the Place du Carrousel, and the Louvre, were filled with cannon, and the entrances of all the streets which open into the Rue St-Honoré strongly guarded. In this position the commanders of the Convention awaited the attack of the insurgents. Buonaparte was indefatigable in his exertions to inspire the troops with confidence: he visited every post, inspected every battery, and spoke to the men with that decision and confidence which is so often the prelude to victory.¹

The action was soon commenced. Above thirty thousand men, under Generals Danican and Duhoux, surrounded the little army of six thousand, who, with this powerful artillery, defended the seat of the legislature. The combat began in the Rue St-Honoré at half-past four; the grenadiers, placed in the Church of St-Roch, opened a fire of musketry on the cannoneers of the Convention, who replied by a discharge of grape-shot, which swept destruction through the serried ranks of the national guard who occupied the Rue St-Honoré. Though the insurgents fought with the most determined bravery, and the fire from the Church of St-Roch was well sustained, nothing could resist the murderous grape-shot of the regular soldiers. Many of the cannoneers fell at their guns, but the fire of their pieces was not diminished. In a few minutes the Rue St-Honoré was deserted, and the flying columns carried confusion into the ranks of the reserve, who were formed near the Church of the Filles-St-Thomas. General Danican galloped off at the first discharge, and never appeared again during the day. Meanwhile, the Pont-Neuf was carried by the insurgents, and a new column, ten thousand strong, advanced along

the opposite quay to the Tuileries, to attack the Pont-Royal. Buonaparte allowed them to advance within twenty yards of his batteries, and then opened his fire ; the insurgents stood three discharges without flinching ; but, not having resolution enough to rush upon the cannon after they were fired, they were ultimately driven back in disorder, and by seven o'clock the victory of the Convention was complete at all points. At nine, the troops of the line carried the posts of the national guard in the Palais Royal, and on the following morning the section Lepelletier was disarmed, and the insurgents everywhere submitted.¹

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¹ Hist. Parl. xxxvii. 53, 57. Deux Amis, xiii. 394, 399. Mig. ii. 394, 395. Lac. xii. 436, 441. Th. viii. 42. 50. Toul. v. 66, 368. Nap. i. 70, 78. Bour. i. 90, 96.

Such was the result of the LAST INSURRECTION of the people in the French Revolution ; all the subsequent changes, till 1830, were effected by the government or the armies, without their interference. The insurgents, on this occasion, were not the rabble or the assassins who had so long stained its history with blood ; they were the flower of the citizens of Paris, comprising all that the Revolution had left that was generous, or elevated, or noble in the capital. They were overthrown, not by the superior numbers or courage of their adversaries, but by the terrible effect of their artillery, by the power of military discipline, and the genius of that youthful conqueror before whom all the armies of Europe were destined to fall. The moral strength of the nation was all on their side ; but, in revolutions, it is seldom that moral strength proves ultimately victorious ; and the examples of Cæsar and Cromwell are not required to show that the natural termination of civil strife is military despotism.

62.
Establishment of military despotism.

The Convention made a generous use of their victory. The Girondists, who exercised an almost unlimited sway over its members, put in practice those maxims of clemency which they had so often recommended to others ; the officers who had gained the victory felt a strong repugnance to their laurels being stained with the blood of their fellow-citizens. Few executions followed this decisive

63.
Humanity of the Convention after their victory.

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxvii. 59.
72. Th. viii.
66. Lac. xii.
441. Mig.
ii. 395. Hist.
de la Conv.
iv. 387, 390.

victory : M. Lafond, one of the military chiefs of the revolt, obstinately resisting the means of evasion which were suggested to him by the court, was alone condemned, and died with a firmness worthy of the cause for which he suffered. Most of the accused persons were allowed time to escape, and sentence of outlawry was merely recorded against them ; many returned shortly after to Paris, and resumed their place in public affairs. The clemency of Buonaparte was early conspicuous ; his counsels, after the victory, were all on the side of mercy, and his intercession saved General Menou from a military commission.¹

64.
Election of
the Council
of Ancients
and the Five
Hundred.

In the formation of the Councils of Five Hundred and of the Ancients, the Convention made no attempt to constrain the public wishes. The third of the legislature, who had been newly elected, were almost all on the side of the insurgents, and even included several Royalists ; and a proposal was in consequence made by Tallien, that the election of that third should be annulled, and another appeal made to the people. Thibaudeau, with equal firmness and eloquence, resisted the proposal, which was rejected by the Convention. They merely took the precaution, to prevent a return to royalty, to name for the Directors five persons who had voted for the death of the King—Larévellère-Lepaux, Rewbell, Letourneur, Barras, and Carnot. Having thus settled the new government, they published a general amnesty, changed the name of the Place de la Révolution into that of Place de la Concorde, and declared their sittings terminated. The last days of an Assembly stained with so much blood were gilded by an act of clemency, of which, Thibaudeau justly said, the annals of kings furnished few examples.²

² Deux
Amis, xv.
399, 404.
Mig. ii. 396.
Lac. xii. 444.
Thib. ii. 12.
13. Th. viii.
65, 67. Hist.
de la Conv.
iv. 389.

65.
Reflections
on the his-
tory of the
Convention.

The Convention sat for more than three years—from the 21st September 1791 to the 26th October 1795. During that long and terrible period, its precincts were rather the field on which faction strove for ascendancy than the theatre on which legislative wisdom exerted its influence. The destruction of human life which took place

during its government, in civil dissension, was unparalleled : it amounted to above A MILLION of human beings ! All the parties which divided France there endeavoured to establish their power, and all perished in the attempt. The Girondists attempted it, and perished ; the Mountain attempted it, and perished ; the Municipality attempted it, and perished ; Robespierre attempted it, and perished ; the Royalists attempted it, and perished. In revolutions it is easy to destroy ; the difficulty is to establish and secure. All the experience of years of suffering, fraught with centuries of instruction—all the wisdom of age, all the talent of youth, were unable to form one stable government. A few years, often a few months, were sufficient to overturn the most apparently stable institutions. A fabric, seemingly framed for permanent duration, disappeared almost before its authors had consummated their work. The gales of popular favour, ever fickle and changeable, deserted each successive faction as it rose into power ; and the ardent part of the nation, impatient of control, deemed any approach to regular government insupportable tyranny. The lower classes, incapable of rational thought, gave their support to the different parties only as long as they continued to inveigh against their superiors ; when they became those superiors themselves, they passed over to their enemies.¹

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¹ Mig. ii.
397. Prud-
homme,
Vict. de la
Rév. vi. 522,
Table 7.

Human institutions are not like the palace of the architect, framed according to fixed rules, capable of erection in any situation, and certain in the effect to be produced. They resemble rather the trees of the forest, slow of growth, tardy of development, readily susceptible of destruction. An instant will destroy what it has taken centuries to produce ; centuries must again elapse before, in the same situation, a similar production can be formed. Transplantation, difficult in the vegetable, is impossible in the moral world ; the seedling must be nourished in the soil, inured to the climate, hardened by the winds. Many examples are to be found of institutions being suddenly

66.
Slow growth
of all dur-
able human
institutions.

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67.
Reflections
on the his-
tory of the
Revolution,
and the
causes of its
disasters.

imposed upon a people—none of those so formed having any duration. To be adapted to their character and habits, they must have grown with their growth, and strengthened with their strength.

The progress of improvement is irresistible. Feudal tyranny must give way in an age of increasing opulence, and the human mind cannot be for ever enchained by the fetters of superstition. No efforts of power could have *prevented* a change in the government of France ; but they might have altered its character and checked its horrors. Nature has ordained that mankind should, when they are fit for it, be free ; but she has not ordained that they should reach this freedom steeped in blood. Although, therefore, the overthrow of the despotic government and modification of the power of the privileged orders of France was inevitable, yet the dreadful atrocities with which their fall was attended might have been averted by human wisdom. The life of the monarch might have been saved instead of sacrificed ; the constitution modified, without being subverted ; the aristocracy purified, without being destroyed. Timely concession from the crown, perhaps, might have altered the character of the French Revolution. Had Louis, in the commencement of the troubles, yielded the great and reasonable demands of the people, and the nobility permitted him to carry his intentions into effect—had he been allowed to grant them equality of taxation, the power of voting subsidies, freedom from arrest, and periodical parliaments—the agitation of the moment might have been allayed, and an immediate collision between the throne and the people prevented. At a subsequent period, indeed, increasing demands, and the want of more extended privileges, might have arisen ; but these discontents, being turned into a regular and legal channel, would probably have found vent without destroying the state. When the floods are out, safety is to be found only in providing early and effectual means for letting off the superfluous waters, and, at the same

time, strengthening the barriers against their further encroachment.

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But although the gradual concession of power, and the redress of all *real* grievances before the Revolution, would have been not less politic than just, nothing can be clearer than that the sudden and vast accession of importance conferred by M. Necker on the Tiers Etat, by the duplication of their numbers, without any decision as to the voting by head or by order, was to the last degree prejudicial, and was, in fact, the immediate cause of the Revolution. Such a sudden addition, like the instantaneous emancipation of slaves, cannot but prove destructive, not only to the higher classes but to the lower. The powers of freedom can only be borne by those who have gradually become habituated to them ; those who acquire them suddenly, by their intemperate use speedily fall under a worse despotism than that from which they revolted. By the consequences of this sudden and uncalled-for innovation, the commons of France threw off the beneficent reign of a reforming monarch, fell under the iron grasp of the Committee of Public Salvation, were constrained to tremble under the bloody sway of Robespierre, and fawn upon the military sceptre of Napoleon.

1795.
68.
Ruinous
effect of
Necker's
duplication
of the Tiers
Etat.

No lesson is more strongly impressed upon the mind, by the progress of the French Revolution, than the disastrous consequences which followed the desertion of their country by the higher orders, and the wonderful effects which might have resulted from a determined resistance on their part to the first actual outrages of the people. Nearly a hundred thousand emigrants fled from France, at a time when a few hundred resolute men might have saved the monarchy from destruction. Lafayette, with five battalions of the national guard, vanquished the Jacobins in the Champ-de-Mars in the most fervent period of the Revolution : had he marched against their club, and been vigorously supported, the Reign of Terror would have been prevented. Five

69.
Dreadful
effect of the
emigration
of the no-
blesse.

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hundred horse would have enabled the Swiss Guard to have saved the throne on the 10th August, and subdued an insurrection which deluged the kingdom with blood. Three thousand of the troops of the sections overthrew Robespierre at the zenith of his power ; a body of undisciplined young men chased the Jacobins from the streets, and rooted them out of their den of wickedness ; Buonaparte, with six thousand regular soldiers, vanquished the national guard of Paris, and crushed an insurrection headed by the whole moral strength of France. These examples may convince us what can be accomplished by a small body of resolute men in civil convulsions : their physical power is almost irresistible ; their moral influence commands success. One-tenth part of the emigrants who fled from France, if properly headed and disciplined, and directed by a courageous monarch on the throne, would have been sufficient to have curbed the fury of the populace in Paris, crushed the ambition of the reckless, and prevented the Reign of Terror.¹

¹ Burke,
vi. 237.

70.
Effects of
the allied
interfer-
ence.

No doubt can now exist that the interference of the Allies augmented the horrors and added to the duration of the Revolution. All its bloodiest excesses were committed during, or after, an alarming but unsuccessful invasion of the allied forces. The massacres of September 2d were perpetrated when the public mind was excited to the highest degree by the near approach of the Duke of Brunswick ; and the worst days of the government of Robespierre were immediately after the defection of Dumourier ; and the battle of Nerwinde threatened the rule of the Jacobins with destruction. Nothing but a sense of public danger could have united the factions who then strove with so much exasperation against each other ; the peril of France alone could have induced the people to submit to the sanguinary rule which so long desolated its plains. The Jacobins maintained their ascendancy by constantly representing their cause as that of national independence, by stigmatising their enemies

as the enemies of the country ; and the patriots wept and suffered in silence, lest by resistance they should weaken the state, and cause France to be erased from among the nations.

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In combating a revolution, one of two courses must be followed—either to advance with vigour, and crush the hydra in its cradle, or to leave the factions to contend with each other, and trust for safety to the reaction which crime and suffering necessarily produce. The suppression of the Spanish Revolution by the Duke d'Angoulême, in 1823, is an example of the success of the first system : the bloodless restoration of the English monarchs, in 1660, a proof of the wisdom of the second. To advance with menaces, and recoil with shame ; to awaken resistance and not extinguish opposition ; to threaten and not execute, is the most ruinous course that can possibly be adopted. It is to unite faction by community of danger ; to convert revolutionary energy into military power ; to strengthen the hands of crime by giving it the support of virtue. Ignorance of the new element which was acting in human affairs may extenuate the fatal errors committed by the European powers in the first years of the Revolutionary war ; no excuse will hereafter remain for a repetition of the mistake.

71.
Causes of
the disasters
it induced.

But it is not with impunity that such sins as disgraced the Revolution can be committed by any people. The actors in the bloody tragedy almost all destroyed each other ; their crimes led to their natural and condign punishment, in rendering them the first victims of the passions which they had unchained. But a signal and awful retribution was also due to the nation which had suffered these iniquities, which had permitted such torrents of innocent blood to flow, and spread the bitterness of domestic suffering to such an unparalleled extent throughout the land. These crimes were registered in the book of fate ; the anguish they had brought on the others was speedily felt by themselves ; the tears they had caused to

72.
Dreadful
retribution
endured by
France.

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flow were washed out in the torrents which fell from guilty eyes.* France was decimated for her cruelty ; for twenty years the flower of her youth was marched away by a relentless power to the harvest of death ; the snows of Russia revenged the guillotine of Paris. Allured by the phantom of military glory, they fell down and worshipped the power which was consuming them ; they followed it to the verge of destruction, till the mask of the spectre fell, and the ghastly features of death appeared.

73.
Manner in
which it was
brought
about.

This dreadful punishment also was the immediate effect of the atrocities which it chastised. In the absence of all the enjoyments of domestic life, in the destruction of every pacific employment, one only career, that of violence, remained. From necessity, as well as inclination, every man took to arms : the sufferings of the state swelled the ranks on the frontier, and France became a great military power, from the causes which it was thought would have led to its destruction. The natural consequence of this was the establishment of military despotism, and the prosecution of the insane career of conquest by a victorious chieftain. France only awoke from her dream of ambition when her youth was mowed down, her armies destroyed, her conquests riven from her, and her glory lost. Both the allied powers and the French people suffered in these disastrous conflicts, because both deserved to suffer : the former for their ambitious projects against the territory of the Republic, and total oblivion of the moral objects of the contest ; the latter for their unparal-leled internal cruelty, and universal external oppression.

74.
Incessant
operation of
the laws of
Providence
during all
the period.

Finally, the history of these melancholy periods affords the strongest evidence of the incessant operation of the principles destined for the preservation and extension of social happiness, even in the darkest periods of human existence. Since the fall of the Roman empire, no such calamitous era had arisen as that which imme-

* " There is in the misfortunes of France enough," says Savary, " to make her sons shed tears of blood."—SAVARY, iv. 382.

diately followed the 10th of August; none in which innocence so generally suffered, and vice so long triumphed; in which impiety was so openly professed, and profligacy so generally indulged; in which blood flowed in such ceaseless torrents, and anguish embittered such a multitude of hearts. Yet, even in those disastrous times, the benevolent laws of nature were incessantly acting: this anguish expiated the sins of former times; this blood tamed the fierceness of present discord. In the stern school of adversity wisdom was learned, and error forgotten; speculation ceased to blind its votaries, and ambition to mislead by the language of virtue. Years of suffering conferred centuries of experience; the latest posterity will, it is to be hoped, in that country at least, reap the fruits of the Reign of Terror. Like all human things, the government of France may undergo changes in the lapse of time; different institutions may be required, and new dynasties called to the throne; but no bloody convulsion similar to that which once tore its bosom will again take place; the higher ranks will not a second time be massacred by the lower—ere another French Revolution of the same character as that which has been portrayed can ensue, the age in which it occurs must be ignorant of the first.

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